

THE INDEPENDENT



Friday 28 November 1997 45p (IR50p) No 3,468

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THE EYE

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TOKEN COLLECT

TODAY'S NEWS

Guinness report reveals 'cavalier' City

The Government's long-awaited report into the Guinness scandal of the mid-1980s, published yesterday, concluded that the whole affair displayed businessmen and financiers behaving with a "cynical disregard of laws and regulations, cavalier misuse of company money and a contempt for truth and common honesty". But Margaret Beckett, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, has decided not to apply to disqualify any of those implicated; several have returned to lucrative and prominent positions in the City. Page 22

Minimum wage let out for young people

Low paid workers aged under 26 may not have the protection of the minimum wage legislation introduced by the Government yesterday. The published Bill allows for the exemption of young people – a move seen as a partial victory for Peter Mandelson, Minister without Portfolio, who wanted the measure to be flexible. Employers could face fines of up to £5,000. Page 11

Spencer's divorce offer

Details of Lord Spencer's proposed divorce settlement with his wife emerged yesterday. He has offered her £300,000, a £24,000 house, more than £2,000 a month, and full maintenance for the children. English lawyers said they would regard that as too low for a man worth £100m; Lady Spencer is seeking £3.75m from him. Page 12

Easier listening Radio 3

Revamped schedules for Radio Three – a station heard by only 1.3 per cent of the listening audience at any one time – were announced yesterday to widespread intrigue and alarm. New presenters – who include Joan Bakewell, Peter Hobday, Richard Baker and David Mello – will run programmes which play shorter but complete pieces, enabling listeners to dip in and out of the station more easily. Page 4

Museum breaks rank

The hitherto united front among museums on admission charges appeared to fracture yesterday, when the director of the Victoria and Albert Museum said he could not countenance the British Museum being subsidised to avoid charges without seeking subsidy of his own to stop charging. Page 3

TELEVISION The Eye, page 32.
CROSSWORDS Page 32 and the Eye, page 29.
WEATHER The Eye, page 30.

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Rallying to the cause: Members of seven separate hunts gathering in Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, yesterday to protest against attempts to ban their sport Hunting debate, page 7

Photograph: Neil Plumb

The heat is on, in the world's warmest year

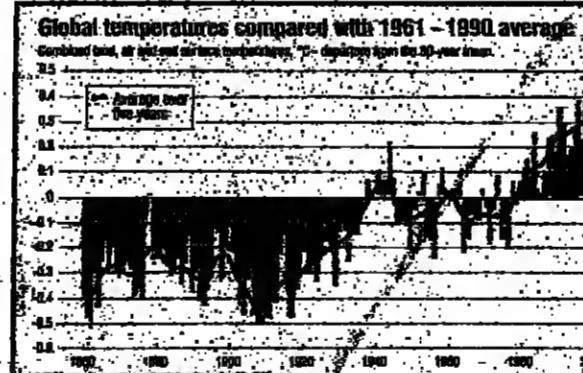
British scientists warn that by 2050, 100 million more people could be facing extreme drought due to mankind altering the climate. And this year is set to be the world's warmest, according to a Met Office report released yesterday. Nicholas Scholes and Colin Brown report on a grim forecast.

With three days left before the UN Climate Treaty summit starts in Kyoto, Japan, the British Government stepped up the international pressure for cuts in greenhouse gas emissions with a grim report on the changes in store for the next century.

Tropical forests, already under pressure, will shrink in a warmer world and their ability to soak up the extra carbon dioxide humanity is putting in the atmosphere will be diminished – tending to accelerate the warming.

Huge sums will have to be spent on new coastal defences as sea levels gradually rise. If not, by 2050 about 200 million people will be seriously endangered by flooding. By then, the climate change will also increase the risks of starvation for 50 million people in the tropics, particularly in Africa.

The report uses the latest supercomputer simulations of climate change up to 2100 from the Met Office's Hadley Centre in



Bracknell, a world leader in this specialised and arcane science. Then it firmed out these predictions from Britain's leading university and government scientists in the fields of water resources, coastline dynamics, crop growing and plant ecology to find out what pressures the rainfall and temperature changes would bring to bear on a global population of about 10 billion people.

Thousands of copies of the report will be distributed among the delegates from 160 nations who begin gathering in Kyoto next Monday. Their task is to negotiate what action needs to be taken to slow down the change in climate caused by humanity's intervention in the atmosphere.

The Hadley Centre's best estimate for the average temperature rise over the next century is between 2.5 and 3C, if countries carry on burning more and more coal, oil and gas in a "business as usual" scenario.

The report uses the latest supercomputer simulations of climate change up to 2100 from the Met Office's Hadley Centre in

sea and air in the tropical east Pacific which occurs every few years... and causes huge disruption and destruction.

But the five warmest years since global records began have all been in the 1990s. Overall, temperatures have risen 0.6C this century, and are expected to carry on rising – but more quickly.

Deputy Executive Director of Greenpeace UK, Chris Rose, said: "All the evidence points to the fact that climate change is already happening ... the sky does indeed have a limit."

Yesterday, in Canberra, Australia, Britain's Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, pleaded with that country's government to change its stance on global warming.

Australia has taken the most extreme position of any developed country, saying it wants to be allowed to raise its greenhouse gas emissions by 18 per cent between 1990 and 2010.

The European Union, which Mr Prescott is representing in a world tour of last minute climate diplomacy, says the wealthy nations must commit to a 15 per cent cut over this period. The US, the biggest polluter in absolute and per capita terms, is holding out for a stabilisation of emissions at the 1990 level by 2010.

It seems increasingly likely that the notion of greenhouse gas emission quotas which can be traded between countries will feature in any final agreement at the Kyoto talks, which last 10 days.

Winnie may face fresh murder charges

Winnie Mandela ordered the murder of her personal doctor, Abu-Baker Asvat, and gave the killer the murder weapon, according to an official document submitted last night to South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation commission. Now there are certain to be great pressures for the woman once known as the Mother of the Nation to be prosecuted for conspiracy to murder. Fred Bridgland reports from Johannesburg.

A prior appointment had been made with the doctor. Dlamini sat in the waiting room. With him was Dr Asvat's receptionist, Albertina Sisulu, wife of ANC chief, Walter Sisulu.

"I went into Dr Asvat's rooms and I shot him twice in the chest," said Mbatha.

Dlamini panicked and tried to climb out of the window, but I shouted to Mrs Sisulu that if she did not open the security doors I would kill her. All of a sudden the doors opened and I ran out together with Dlamini."

The South African Police have been accused of covering up the full facts about the Asvat murder, which happened four weeks after the killing of Stomie Mocke.

Evidence has emerged at the TRC hearings that Dr Asvat examined Stomie at Mrs Mandela's house after he had been severely beaten, on 29 December 1988, by her Mandela United Football Club. Asvat told Mrs Mandela that Stomie was so severely injured he would die unless taken to hospital. Stomie was stabbed to death later that night.

Witness's amnesia, page 8

Will you give Mary a bed this Christmas?



At 16, Mary ran away from a life of abuse. Today she is homeless. Could you sleep easy on Christmas Eve knowing she was shivering in a bus shelter?

You can help keep Mary, and thousands of vulnerable people like her, safe and warm over Christmas. With £25 from you, Crisis can provide a warm bed, hot meals, clean clothes and someone to talk to at one of our shelters.

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* Gifts of £25 or more are worth almost a third extra to us under Gift Aid

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IN TOMORROW'S 5 SECTION INDEPENDENT

Christmas shopping made easy
THE MAGAZINE

Top books of the year from Homer Simpson to Che Guevara THE MAGAZINE

Mighty drive through the Sahara and guide to the best world's festival TIME OFF

Our cat beats the experts... again YOUR MONEY

Museums fall out in crisis over charging

The united front by national museums over free admissions has been broken. The director of the Victoria and Albert Museum tells our arts news editor, David Lister, that he will not tolerate financial help being given to some museums and not others.

In a strong challenge to the Government, Alan Borg said yesterday that if the Government found money for the British Museum to stop it charging, the V&A's trustees would consider scrapping their charges and demand a similar "hand-out." Until now the campaign to maintain free admissions among the national museums and galleries that do not charge — the British Museum, Tate, National Gallery and National Portrait Gallery — has been united.

But the intervention of Dr Borg, the V&A director, shows the resentment that has been building up among national museums and galleries which have felt obliged to impose admission charges in the face of declining grants. Whitehall sources have hinted that though the Government might next loosen its commitment to free admission all national museums, it is considering an eleventh-hour increase in the grant for the British Museum to prevent it charging for the first time in its 230-year history.

Dr Borg said: "If the British Museum does receive a special sum to prevent it charging, there would be an immediate challenge from charging museums. The temptation for our trustees will be to say 'thank you very much, we'll take off our charges now.' That's an argument that will be had if the British Museum gets a handout. The Government could well see the British Museum as

the last bastion which must be safeguarded. But if the do something for the British Museum they have to do something for the rest of us."

This was attacked last night by Charles Samaurez-Smith, director of the National Portrait Gallery: "Everyone in the museum community as a whole must support the British Museum", he said, in achieving an end to its financial problems and safeguarding free admission.

Dr Borg said: "... The Government appears to have shifted from 'let's keep museums free' to 'let's keep museums that are still free, free.' That is unfair, and a distortion. We would all like to be free, but those of us who made the decision to charge early on to stop standards deteriorating should not be penalised. Charging was the lesser of two evils."

He also condemned as "rubbish" the argument by directors, including Neil MacGregor, the National Gallery head, that people are more likely to drop in to museums and galleries regularly when admission is free.

Dr Borg said: "The argument that you could no longer drop in for a few minutes is rubbish. The V&A has an annual season ticket for £15, and entry is free after 4.30 in the afternoon every day."

A different aspect to the debate is raised today by Sir Denis Mahon, who recently bequeathed a number of masterpieces to the National Gallery and other institutions on condition they do not bring in admission charges.

He has said he will withdraw his pictures if the institutions charge. In a letter to *The Independent*, he says: "... I am all in favour of genuine partnership between the private sector and the state for the benefit of the public. But if ... the state falls short of its evident duty I shall feel most sadly driven to reconsider my own possible involvement..."

Letters, page 20

Stars turn out to mourn Hutchence in Sydney



Michael Hutchence's coffin, draped with 500 irises and a single tiger-lily, at the funeral yesterday in Sydney

Photograph: Rex Photos

Ian Burrell

The funeral of the singer Michael Hutchence took place yesterday in Australia, watched by millions of viewers who saw it broadcast live. The coffin was draped with 500 irises and a single tiger-lily, representing the singer's 16-month-old daughter, Heavenly Hiraani Tiger Lily, who was cradled by her mother, Paula Yates.

Fans gathered outside Sydney's St Andrew's Cathedral to pay respects. One was removed from the church by police after reportedly trying to jump from a balcony in an apparent suicide attempt. Mourners included Kylie Minogue, Tom Jones, Diana Ross and Nick Cave, who sang the song "Into my arms" as part of the service.

Ms Yates did not wear the wedding-dress she had hoped to don in January for her marriage to Hutchence and which she had said she would dye black for the funeral. Instead she wore a sleeveless, knee-length white-floral-patterned black dress.

The decision to broadcast the service live was criticised by members of Hutchence's band, INXS, who said it would not have been what he would have wanted. He was found hanged in Sydney on Saturday in his suite at a hotel. He had arrived in Australia three days earlier for the start of INXS's 20th-anniversary tour.

Ian Burrell

Woman to be sued for libel by jailed rapist

A convicted rapist won the right to sue a woman for libel over a letter she wrote to police, which, he claims, cost him the chance of parole.

Michael Streeter, Legal Affairs Correspondent, reports on an extraordinary case.

Bank clerk Lynne Griffiths wrote to police complaining about constant "harassment" from rapist David Daniels, who was serving a life sentence. She said the numerous letters and telephone calls from the pris-

oner, who was at Gartree prison, were affecting the health of her family.

That letter helped keep Daniels behind bars, persuading prison authorities and doctors that his claims of an emotional relationship with Mrs Griffiths — who was not the rape victim — were invented. The Parole Board panel refused to release him.

Now, as a result of her complaint, Mrs Griffiths is being forced to defend an expensive libel action, and already faces costs running into tens of thousands of pounds after she failed yesterday to get his action stopped. Legal aid is not avail-

able and both parties are having to fund their own costs.

Mrs Griffiths' solicitor, Ann Morgan, said her client was "devastated and bewildered" by yesterday's ruling. She now had to face a full trial, seeing Daniels in court and incurring more expense. "We are determined to fight on," said Ms Morgan. "The alternative is unthinkable — namely to lie by admitting a relationship with the plaintiff which is a figment of his imagination."

Although Daniels has been convicted of no offence against Mrs Griffiths, one concern is that the case could dissuade victims from approaching authori-

ties in the future if they are worried about the release of their attacker. Probation officers are obliged to seek the views of the victim before preparing parole reports.

The Court of Appeal, overturning an earlier judgement, ruled that Daniels' action was not an abuse of process and designed solely to harass Mrs Griffiths.

At the hearing, Cherie Booth QC, for Daniels, said her client claimed Mrs Griffiths' letter to South Wales police was libellous and he should have the chance to sue her and cross-examine her in court. Ms Booth asked that the truth of his

claims could be tested and "convince the prison authorities he is not mad".

"He has always maintained there was no physical relationship but there was a strong affection between them which she could not acknowledge."

Sir Brian Neill, giving judgement alongside Lord Justice Hirst and Lord Justice Swinton Thomas, said Daniels maintained that the authorities treat him though he had made up a "completely fictitious account" of the relationship.

"Unless he can establish the true position by means of these proceedings, he has no prospect of correcting this misconception and therefore no realistic prospect of obtaining parole."

He said Daniels' action faced "formidable difficulties", but the defendant had not shown it was bound to fail.

Mrs Griffiths has said that Daniels, who was convicted in 1983, had never been anything more than the man who served her while he was employed at a local newsagents in Swansea.

She wrote to police saying she feared he would attack her if he was released, and in June, 1994 the parole board turned down his application after he had served 11 years of his sentence, saying his feelings for Mrs Griffiths were "pathological".

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Parents urge girl's killer to surrender

The killer of the schoolgirl Kate Bushell was living in a private hell and should give himself up, her father said yesterday.

Jeremy Bushell, 44, and Kate's mother Suzanne, 41, appealed for anyone shielding the killer to come forward and say where he was. "I would not want anyone else to suffer as we have suffered," said Mrs Bushell.

The grieving couple spoke for the first time since their 14-year-old daughter was murdered walking a neighbour's dog in Exeter, Devon.

Mr Bushell, a retired local government officer, found his daughter's body in the corner of the field a few hundred yards away from her home on 15 November. Her throat had been cut and today 120 police officers are still hunting her killer.

Mr and Mrs Bushell gave their first interview at their detached home in Burrator Drive, Exwick, Exeter, from where the murder scene can be seen from Kate's bedroom at the rear of the house. The distraught couple were surrounded by floral tributes and some of the 600 cards of condolence from all over the country as they spoke today.

Mr Bushell said: "If anybody

knows the killer, or thinks they do, there is a very, very sick person who is basically living in hell, and his private hell can only be relieved by coming forward."

Mrs Bushell said if someone was shielding the killer, it was in some ways human instinct to protect those you love.

But she asked them to say who it was adding: "I do think he needs help. I would not want anyone to suffer as we have suffered." Mrs Bushell felt Kate was "in the wrong place at the wrong time".

Kate was murdered as she walked a Jack Russell terrier named Gemma for neighbours who were away at the time.

"She went out as normal, we did not think anything of it, there was light," said Mrs Bushell adding that her daughter took out the dog to "help the neighbours".

Her husband added: "So many people walk dogs up and down that lane. We all thought it was a safe place and a safe lane. It could have been anyone. I do not think Kate was specifically targeted."

Asked whether he had heard any rumours that the lane was unsafe Mr Bushell said: "We were not aware of it. There was always that sort of fear in any

community something could be unsafe. We have not heard anything specific."

"You cannot live your life in a cocoon. You have got to live it in the world where you are."

Asked how they would come to terms with the loss of their daughter, Mrs Bushell said: "We will never forget Kate. She's always going to be with us, we had 14 lovely years with her."

And her husband added: "Everything you had hoped for for Kate is out there. It takes time to come to terms with that. I do not know how we are going to cope. Life has to go on. You cannot live in the past."

"We had such a fabulous 14 years which have always been a treasure to us."

"It would have been lovely if it had been a full life span."

Speaking of the hundreds of cards and letters they had received, Mr Bushell said: "It has been so much appreciated. The whole of the country has been carrying us, these expressions of love and the way people have reached out."

"Without that I do not know how we would have survived."

The couple said they were setting up a memorial fund for Kate following questions from a number of people who wanted to make donations.



Post-deluge: Ruined possessions filling the square of the Cornish coastal village of Pentewan yesterday as a massive clean-up operation got under way after hours of torrential and a thunderstorm on Wednesday led to flooding up to four deep in St Austell, Pentewan and Polgoon

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Family claims Luxor victim's body was looted before being flown home

The body of a British woman who was killed in the Luxor massacre was being flown back to Britain after being sent to Switzerland by mistake. Jojo Moyes and Steve Crawshaw heard also that the bodies of two other British victims had been looted.

Urgent arrangements were being made to fly the body of Joan Turner, 53, back to Britain so a triple funeral, originally scheduled for yesterday, can take place.

Relatives of Mrs Turner, her daughter Karina, 24, and granddaughter Shauna, five, were only told on Wednesday that

hers was not the body in a funeral parlour in West Yorkshire. It is believed that the body of a Swiss citizen's body was wrongly sent to this country.

The Foreign Office has said the mix-up began when a member of British Embassy staff wrongly identified a Swiss national as Mrs Turner before the body was flown to Britain. An unnamed family member then also wrongly identified the body at Heathrow Airport before a post-mortem examination was carried out.

The mistake was discovered when staff in Zurich realised that one of the bodies taken there was not that of the Swiss citizen who was killed when militant Islamic gunmen opened fire on tourists at the resort of Luxor, southern Egypt, killing 68.

Egypt has gone one step further in its war of words with Britain, publishing a denunciation of alleged terrorists abroad. An Egyptian government booklet, *Call to Combat Terrorism*, says militants are "currently en-

joying secure and convenient asylum in some world capitals". The booklet calls on the international community "to deny such terrorists any safe haven". However, critics of Egypt say that its government has been ready to label as "terrorists" those who are political opponents.

President Mubarak has already attacked Britain for its allegedly soft line on terrorism. *Call to Combat Terrorism* lists 14 leading Muslim militants, mostly with photographs. At least two of the men named are based in London — including Abu Yasser el-Serr, who claimed this week that his application for asylum in Britain would be granted "very soon". Mr el-Serr has been sentenced to death in Egypt in connection with an assassination attempt on the then Egyptian Prime Minister.

A leading loyalist figure was critically injured in a shooting at a taxi cab office on the Crumlin road yesterday in the most serious of a series of violent incidents in north Belfast.

The man, who has been named locally as Jackie Mahood, was shot several times by gunmen who went to an office on the first floor of the premises of the "Call A Cab" firm and singled him out shortly after 5pm. The gunmen entered and left the building by a rear door.

Mr Mahood was rushed to a local hospital with wounds to the head and neck. Police took a security video away from the premises for examination. RUC Assistant Chief Constable Bill Stewart describing the shooting as "a senseless act".

Responsibility for the incident was not immediately clear. The office is an area which is

— David McKittrick

Bomber wreckage found

The wreckage of a Second World War German plane has been discovered by water workers laying a pipe next to a railway line.

Army bomb disposal officers were called to the Middlesbrough site on Wednesday night to deal with what was first believed only to be ammunition. But further investigations today revealed it was part of the wreckage of a German plane — which could still contain the bodies of the crew.

The site has been cleared and rail traffic was stopped for a while as police feared there may still be live ammunition and bombs on board the plane. A machine gun, part of a propeller, wheels, part of the undercarriage and a parachute have been found.

John Keeoen, engineer in charge of the site for N-Tec, the contractors overseeing the work, saw the debris as it was discovered. He said: "The first thing we found was the ammunition but then it became almost like a time capsule. The plane is in one piece. The wreckage was charred so it must have caught fire when it crashed. It was just underground because it came down in soft clay. We knew it was German because we found a metal plate with writing and a serial number on it. The machine gun we found was in very good condition and even had a bullet still in the barrel. We also found a wooden jumper."

Radio 3 chief denies 'dumbing down'

Every time the BBC changes Radio 3 there are cries that the barbarians are at the gate. Paul McCann, Media Correspondent, hears the BBC say that easier-to-find programmes need not mean easy listening.

The BBC denied yesterday that it was "dumbing down" Radio 3 when it announced a new schedule that puts Joan Bakewell, Richard Baker and Peter Hobday at the heart of its

output. Nicholas Kenyon, controller of Radio 3, said the changes were designed to make it easier for listeners to find programmes and told his critics that it was "insane" for the station to stand still.

Programmes will be given regular start times and more signposting so listeners can find what they want. There will be regular programmes every morning hosted by Bakewell, Baker and Hobday, and more specialist programmes being moved to the evenings.

Mr Keoyoo denied that the changes were about "chasing numbers" and instead said he

wants Radio 3's 2.5 million listeners to increase the amount of time they spend listening.

Baker rejoins the station after leaving the BBC in 1995 to work for Classic FM. He will present a daily programme, *Sound Stories*, which will use linked themes to explain the background to pieces of music.

Bakewell will present a daily slot, *Artist of the Week*, that will concentrate on the work of one musician over five days, while Hobday has had his 9am show extended by 90 minutes.

Responding to the Save Rad-

io 3 lobby group, Mr Keoyoo said: "It would be an insane per-

son who did not commit themselves wholeheartedly to change. We have to respond to the way people live their lives now. Our aim is not to increase the number of listeners but to increase the amount of listening they do."

Stephie Follows, chairman of Save Radio 3, said: "This is the start of a drip-drip process. They are playing more CD music and easy listening music. In the end you will be left with a bland 24-hour drive-time sound.

They are getting away from specialist music to try to appeal to an idealised general audience that doesn't exist."

He wants Radio 3's 2.5 million listeners to increase the amount of time they spend listening.

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5/MINING



Disenchanted: Alan Horner leaving the day shift at Rossington Colliery, South Yorkshire, where he has spent nearly 25 years. Photograph: Tom Pilston

Labour's new intake confronted by a gritty old problem

With the threat of closure hanging over half the coal industry, new Labour is facing an old Labour problem. Barrie Clement, Labour Editor, visits Rossington Colliery, in South Yorkshire.

miles away. "Or I could go shelf stacking like our lass."

Two women's wear factories and some light industry in Rossington would be unable to cope with 330 redundant pitmen from the local colliery.

Many of the miners instinctively feel that the Government is in the process of betraying them. "They all said

ers had done everything possible to make the colliery profitable. "These men were hand-picked, you won't get better. We have cut ourselves to the bone and turned the industry upside down. We just want a fair crack of the whip. I can't believe the way a Labour government is treating us. They seem to think because it is a private company, we are out of their hair."

Caroline Flint concedes that she has no detailed knowledge of coalmining and refers technical questions to her colleague Kevin Barron, MP for Rother Valley, who has extensive experience in the industry.

She points out that her constituency has a wide range of industries of which the single colliery is a part. She argues that many of the problems stem from the Tory legacy, but says that an all-party group of MPs were doing their best to ensure there was a continuing demand for coal.

She said that the MPs were attempting to put pressure on the Government to develop a balanced energy policy with coal playing a strong part, as well as gas. Ministers were being prevailed upon to reinvigorate their campaign against subsidies to the industry in Germany and Spain. In the short-term - closures could begin before Christmas - she believed that there was scope for persuading power generators to use more coal.

A lot in opposition about a balanced energy policy, now they are hiding their voices in their beards - I'm talking about Robin Cook," Mr Horner said.

According to some industry observers - and despite significant reserves - Rossington could be a serious candidate for closure. British Coal closed the pit in 1993, but it returned to production in 1994 when RJB Mining leased it from the state and spent more than £17m on new machinery.

Keo Ashton, a shift manager who has worked for 33 years at the pit, said Rossington miners will be little else for men to do if the mine closed.

One 39-year-old underground worker reckoned that the only major enterprise now taking on labour was a chicken-gutting factory in Scunthorpe 20

miles away. "Or I could go shelf stacking like our lass."

Two women's wear factories and some light industry in Rossington would be unable to cope with 330 redundant pitmen from the local colliery.

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Blair reveals request to 'bail out' industry

Tony Blair told a private meeting of Labour's national executive committee on Wednesday that he had been asked to save the coal industry.

Replying to a point made by Dennis Skinner about lone-parents child benefit, the Prime Minister is reported to have said with some exasperation: "All these demands. Now I have been asked to bail out the coal industry."

In public, as John Battle, the beleaguered energy minister, told the Commons on Wednesday morning, there is very little the Government can do in the face of the intransigence of Richard Budge, chairman of RJB Mining. Behind the scenes,

however, it is known that John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, and other colleagues are fighting a desperate rear-guard action to help save miners' jobs.

The dilemma faced by ministers was underlined during question time in the Lords yesterday. Lord Ezra, a former National Coal Board chairman, urged action in the face of "persistent reports that up to eight of the remaining 24 deep mines in this country [are] likely to be closed in the next few months, leading to 5,000 redundancies".

Lord Clinton-Davis, a trade and industry minister, said that, since coal privatisation, the scope for Government inter-

vention was very limited indeed. He said that Mr Battle had already challenged unfair subsidies in Europe, reviewed coal prices, challenged gas contracts and ensured unfairly-supported French nuclear power did not have an unfair advantage.

"I am aware of the difficulties facing the industry," Lord Clinton-Davis said. "But I have to say, the main company concerned is, of course, the one that has to sort out these problems".

One alternative option raised by Mr Skinner in the Commons last week was for the industry to be renationalised. But there are few Labour MPs who believe that is possible.

— Anthony Bevins

'King Coal' attacked in Commons motion

A strong personal attack was made on Richard Budge, chairman of RJB Mining, in two Commons motions last night. Anthony Bevins, Political Editor, reports on a dramatic threat to 'King Coal'.

A fully-fledged judicial tribunal of inquiry should be set up to report on the 'Tory privatisation of the coal industry, and the transfer of pits to RJB Mining at the end of 1994. Labour MPs led by Robert Marshall-Andrews, QC, urged the Government last night.

It was proposed that the tribunal should be asked to investigate the background of RJB directors - "in particular Richard Budge, in the light of the report by Coopers and Lybrand, receivers for AF Budge, to the DTI in 1994; that Richard Budge was unfit to be concerned in the management of a company."

With Tony Blair being pressed by Cabinet colleagues to intervene on behalf of thousands of miners currently facing another Christmas under the threat of redundancy, the backbench attack on Mr Budge is ex-

pected to gather support and momentum.

One of two motions tabled last night said RJB Mining and/or Mr Budge had made a profit of £200m out of the mines.

It then repeated a suggestion made in confidential government documents, that RJB Mining was in accordance with good business practice; whether RJB Mining has carried out its business in accordance with good business practice and law; whether proper undertakings were sought from, or given by, RJB Mining, by or to the last administration, in relation to closures and redundancies within the industry."

The terms of the motion are clearly fuelled by an intense Labour anger over RJB's actions over recent months - and the threats it had made that the jobs of at least 5,000 of its 9,000 remaining deep-pit miners are in jeopardy.

Of the country's 25 remaining principal collieries, 18 are currently owned by RJB Mining - and the threat from the company is real.

Another Commons motion, put down on Tuesday, condemns the imminent closure by RJB Mining of Asfordby mine in Leicestershire.

As for the tribunal of inquiry - a judicial investigation with powers to compel the delivery of evidence, under oath - one Marshall-Andrews motion says its terms of reference should include:

"Whether the sale of undertakings in the industry to Richard Budge and/or RJB Mining was in accordance with good business practice; whether RJB Mining has carried out its business in accordance with good business practice and law; whether proper undertakings were sought from, or given by, RJB Mining, by or to the last administration, in relation to closures and redundancies within the industry."

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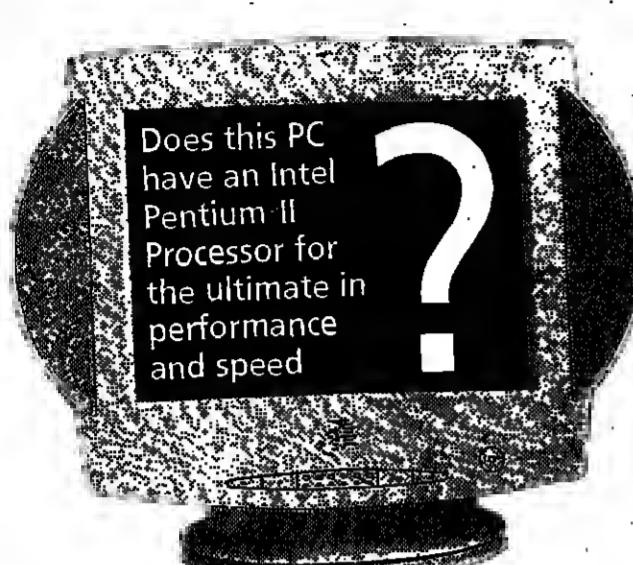
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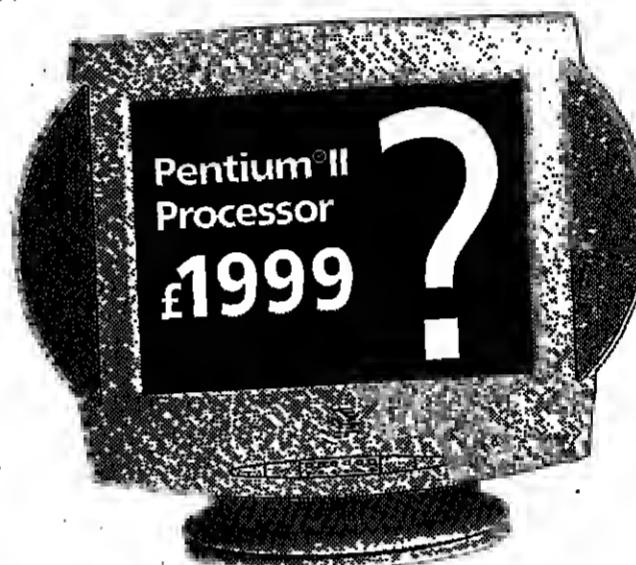
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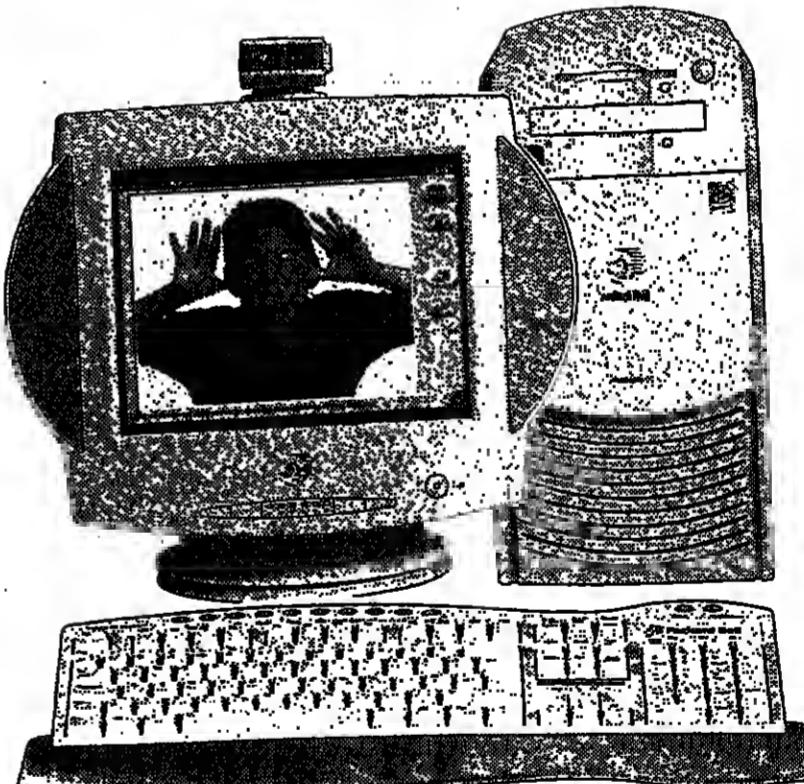
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7/HUNTING

Stag ban is lifted but Whitehall fights over bones of a Bill

The Government will raise hopes of a ban on foxhunting being imposed before the next election, even if the private member's Bill in the Commons today is eventually killed. But Colin Brown, Chief Political Correspondent, says hunt supporters were given a boost yesterday by the Forestry Commission.

On the eve of today's Commons vote on a bill to ban hunting with hounds, hunt supporters claimed a victory after a tactical retreat by the Forestry Commission to lift a ban on stag hunting by the Quantock Hunt on its land for the rest of this season.

The Commission's decision came after farmers shot 36 stags in protest at the ban on the Quantock Hunt and assembled them for a photograph of the mass slaughter, which appeared on the front page of *The Independent* on Tuesday. "This gives us a breathing space to fight for the ban to be lifted next season," said a hunt supporter.

But the Forestry Commission yesterday said it would not allow any hunting of deer on its land anywhere else, and that the Quantock Hunt would not be allowed a licence next season. The hunt, in Somerset, is only being given extra time to allow alternative ways of controlling deer numbers to be organised.

Campaigners for a ban on all hunting with hounds will be in full cry today in the vote on hunting. They are expecting a massive majority at around 3.30pm with most Labour MPs

staying in Westminster to vote for the Bill, instead of going off to their constituencies for the weekend.

Michael Heseltine, the former deputy prime minister, will lead the charge against the Bill, and its opponents are confident of strangling the Bill in Parliamentary barbed wire during its committee stage. It will only take a handful of committed "saboteurs" to kill the Bill in later stages because of the lack of time.

But George Howarth, the Home Office minister, will give a clear signal that the Government is prepared to give the supporters of a ban a second chance, by allowing a forthcoming law and order Bill to be amended to include a ban on foxhunting, if the private member's Bill by Labour MP Michael Foster fails. That would ensure a ban had time to reach the Statute Book before the election. "The Government's line is that if the private member's Bill fails to complete its passage, it would be open to members to move amendments should a suitable vehicle occur in future sessions of Parliament," said a Whitehall source.

Ministers are keen to avoid further charges against Tony Blair for an alleged breach of faith over Labour's commitment to ensure a free vote on banning foxhunting.

Supporters of the Bill have put on unofficial whips for each region to ensure the highest possible turnout by Labour MPs to vote for the Bill's second reading. One of the unofficial whips told *The Independent* last night: "There is going to be a massive turnout. We are expecting a full house and a big majority in favour of the Bill."

Rallies and polls cheer both sides

Supporters and opponents of Michael Foster's Bill to ban fox hunting were last night bracing themselves for the climax of months of hard-fought campaigning.

Representatives from both camps - the Campaign for the Protection of Hunted Animals and the Countryside Alliance - spent the last night before the crucial Commons debate holding 24-hour vigils in Westminster. Both sides were buoyed by the results of various polls, phone-ins and surveys which have surfaced in the past few days.

The anti-hunting lobby trumpeted the results of a new Mori poll showing that 54 per cent of adults in Henley-on-Thames wanted their local MP, Michael Heseltine, to support Mr Foster's Bill. Sixty-four per cent of the 500 adults surveyed said they did not believe that fox hunting was an important part of the British way of life and 76 per cent thought hunters should take part in drag hunting.

Meanwhile, the pro-hunting lobby was celebrating the volume of callers who had expressed their opposition to the Bill after a live television debate on hunting earlier this week. Of the 1 million people who phoned ITV, 55 per cent voted in favour of a ban and 45 per cent against.

Sam Butler, who helped organise last July's Countryside Rally in Hyde Park, said: "That is a very, very significant mi-

nority. After Mr Foster has been on the road for three months with a campaign bus and the IFOR, RSPCA and League Against Cruel Sports have spent significant amounts of money - reported to be £5m, but now denied - the swing from a break 73 per cent in favour of a ban to 55 per cent is an indication of country feeling and a very significant one."

Earlier, more than 3,000 countryside campaigners joined 500 horses and riders at a rally at a disused aerodrome near Melton Mowbray in Leicestershire. They heard speeches, including one from local Tory MP and close aide of William Hague, Alan Duncan, and watched a parade of local hunts.

Rad Thomas, joint master of the Quorn Hunt, urged the public to think carefully about the issues. "People have turned out in strength today because they are desperately worried that this Bill attempting to make us criminals," he said. "They know in their heart of hearts that the loser, if the Bill becomes law, will be the fox and the countryside and a way of life."

Roderick Duncan, of the Union of Country Sports Workers, said many country people feared for their livelihoods if the Bill becomes law. "A lot of people are going to lose their jobs and many also live in tied accommodation so they could lose their homes as well."

— Clare Gower



Canine protest: Foxhounds outside the House of Commons yesterday, as part of a demonstration against a private member's Bill to ban hunting with hounds. Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

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Hun Sen's foe
returns home

Amnesia strikes witnesses at Winnie death hearings

Archbishop Tutu has taken a tough line with some witnesses at the Johannesburg hearings into Winnie Mandela's alleged atrocities. But Mory Braid says he failed yesterday to press top ANC officials in the same way to reveal all they know.

The archbishop rebuked a lawyer at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings for pressing Nithato Motlana, Mrs Mandela's former doctor and now one of South Africa's leading businessmen, about his poor memory of the 1989 kidnapping of the teenage activist Stompie Seipei Moekeka and three other youths.

Dr Motlana, called in by a desperate community to persuade Mrs Mandela to release the youths, said he could not remember the conversation he later had with her.

Although there had been panic about the youngsters' safety, he claimed he had not asked to see them.

Neither did he remember them having any injuries when the three youths - minus Stompie, who was later found with his throat slit - were finally handed over to him after days of beatings.

Tony Richard, the lawyer representing Gerry Richardson, the coach of the Mandela United Football Club, who was jailed for Stompie's murder, requested that a senior ANC MP, Aubrey Mokoena, was "an evasive and obstructive



Mokoena: ANC MP was called an 'evasive and obstructive witness'

Committee after the kidnapping of Stompie. They instructed organisations to refuse Mrs Mandela a platform and warned her to dismantle the club "lest the community dismantle the club for her."

What prevented some witnesses from telling all was a matter for speculation. Some believe it is fear of Mrs Mandela, who, if she becomes ANC deputy president next month, will wield enormous power.

Others said ANC members were trying to play down the fact that damage limitation had been their prime concern after Stompie's abduction. Perhaps it was just old-fashioned ANC solidarity, a hard habit to break even when your comrade has been implicated in at least six murders and many more assaults.

The ANC's rather shameful day was brought to a dramatic close when Azhar Cachalia, former leading light in the liberation movement, took Mrs Mandela apart.

He strongly urged the commission to recommend that charges be brought against her. The hall burst into applause.

The pressure is piling up on the "Mother of the Nation". Yesterday questions from the lawyer for the family of Dr Abu-Baker Aswat, who was murdered after examining Stompie's body, suggested that the murder case may be reopened.

Two men were jailed for the doctor's killing. They claimed their motive was robbery, but Mrs Mandela has been linked to the murder of a man who many people believe knew too much.

Now, the killers may be about to change their story.

— Reuters, Phnom Penh

N Korea lured to peace talks

South Korea's Foreign Minister said the main aim of Washington talks between North Korea and the United States were to get the North to attend four-party peace talks in Geneva.

The US State Department said on Wednesday that talks between North Korean and American officials "were held in a businesslike manner". North and South Korea, the United States and China last week agreed to begin peace talks on 9 December.

— Reuters, Seoul

Sam Rainsy left Cambodia several weeks before the powerful Second Prime Minister Hun Sen toppled his former coalition partner Ranariddh in early July. He was mobbed by supporters when he arrived at Phnom Penh airport. Sam Rainsy is the most prominent opposition politician to return since Hun Sen's takeover.

— Reuters, Phnom Penh



Kama Sutra film is a hit with Sri Lanka's women

The audience (above) leaves a cinema in Colombo, Sri Lanka, after a women-only screening of the Indian film *Kama Sutra*, which incorporates elements of the ancient

sex manual. Women's groups said they were too shy to watch with men sitting next to them, but the cinema reported big profits from the single-sex screenings. The film, seen from a women's point of view, was made by the controversial female director Mira Nair. She had run-ins with the censors in India, who demanded cuts.

Mugabe lists white farms

Saddam keeps UN guessing over access to palaces

Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe has vowed to press ahead with a controversial land reform plan which he believes is crucial for social justice. The government will today publish a list of 1,503 farms which it has earmarked for compulsory purchase from white commercial farmers to resettle landless peasants. Mr Mugabe has said he would pursue the plan even after Britain's refusal to fund it.

Although Mr Mugabe hinted he might be able to modify the plan, political analysts said he seemed determined to put up a show and to boost its popularity with peasants.

Observers have warned that a quick and massive change in land ownership would severely affect agricultural output, which contributes 40 per cent of Zimbabwe's export receipts and 60 per cent of its inputs to its manufacturing sector. Mr Mugabe has not said when he would take control of the farms. But in October he said this would happen "in the year of our Lord 1997".

Iraq continued its dance of unpredictability yesterday, refusing access to Saddam Hussein's palaces less than 24 hours after appearing to suggest that UN inspectors would be allowed in.

The Iraqi Foreign Minister, Mohammed Saied al-Saifi, said the invitation was intended for international experts and diplomats, not UN inspectors.

In New York, it was announced that Iraq would not renew its deal on food-for-oil unless its grievances about the existing contract were met.

Mr al-Saifi said the invitation was an Iraqi suggestion to have full and complete transparency with the world, in order to disprove a "wave of false allegations and lies" about Iraq's possession of banned weapons.

Before Iraq rejected the demands of the UN inspectors to gain access to President Saddam's 78 palaces, there had been a cautious welcome in Washington for the apparent olive branch that was offered on Wednesday night, when Iraq invited "representatives from all

the countries represented in the UN Special Commission" to stay in the palaces "for a week or more".

Yesterday, however, Bill Clinton and the US leadership were branded as liars. *Babel* newspaper said: "The American Secretary of Defense William Cohen is not different from his president or the current US Secretary of State... They are all liars." Iraq's parliament called for UN sanctions to be lifted in six months. Saadoun Hammadi, parliamentary speaker, said Iraq had met all its obligations under UN Security Council resolutions, and insisted that "there are no banned weapons in Iraq".

In Moscow, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said Iraq was taking a "constructive approach" to reducing tensions with the UN. The Communist Party leader, Gennady Zyuganov, said the Russian parliament and the Russian people would "continue to work for the lifting of the unfair embargo on the friendly Iraqi people".

— Steve Crowshaw

Families demand parole for jailed Chinese dissidents

Two weeks after China freed Wei Jingsheng, its best known dissident, and forced him into exile in the United States, families or supporters of several political prisoners who remain behind bars have demanded medical parole for them.

The most prominent pro-democracy activist still in jail in China, Wang Dan, 28, is the most likely candidate for another parole and exile, as the release of a high-profile name would most benefit China in its dealing with the US.

Mr Wang's mother, Wang Lingyu, said the family would renew an earlier appeal for medical parole "before the end of the year".

For several months the family has said Mr Wang's health has sharply deteriorated in jail.

"It's been half a year, they still have not said yes or no to our request for medical parole," she said. Mr Wang, a student leader in 1989, was last year jailed for 11 years for subversion. He had previously served a four-year term.

told Reuters news agency by telephone.

Mr Sun, like Mr Wei, has been beaten in jail by other inmates, who receive rewards for such attacks. Amnesty International has appealed for the release of 39-year-old Chen Longde who was sent to a labour camp last year for writing a letter to parliament calling for the release of Mr Wei. In August 1996 he jumped from a window to escape beatings and is still on crutches.

The wife of the veteran activist, Liu Jingsheng, who was jailed in 1995 for 15 years for subversion, has also sought medical parole for her husband.

Meanwhile, in the US, Mr Wei is getting used to being a free man again, and has been deciding between job offers which would have been utter fantasy just two weeks ago.

Yesterday he accepted an appointment as a visiting scholar at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs, where he will deliver lectures and workshops.

— Teresa Poole, Peking



Wang Dan: Health has deteriorated sharply

Many other dissidents, whose names are unknown in the West, are languishing in jails and labour camps. The parents of Sun Liyong wrote to the Justice Minister this week, after doctors recently found their son had tuberculosis after serving all but six months of a seven-year sentence.

Mr Sun's crime was to print a publication demanding the release of those jailed after the 1989 pro-democracy process.

"I'm worried he'll die in prison,"

Mr Sun's mother, Hu Xueling,

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9/RUSSIA

Adverts tempt and taunt old comrades

Seventy years ago this month, Lenin banned commercial advertising in Russia in favour of state propaganda. Now it's back with a vengeance, writes Phil Reeves in Moscow, but to mixed reviews.

Not long ago, the Moscow-based newspaper *Kommersant* came up with what it hoped was a good wheeze. Keen to boost its modest sales, it bought some billboards and plastered them with eye-catching slogans printed in big, black letters. "Who's the boss here?" asked one. "What's going on?" said another. "How will it all end?" asked a third. "What about the money?" The questions stood without explanation; nowhere was the newspaper mentioned.

To Western eyes, it was an orthodox marketing stunt. But in Russia, consumerism is young and the social order fragile; complaints flooded in. They were subversive, said bureaucrats; it was an attempt to stir up revolutionary sentiments. In the Siberian city of Novosibirsk, officials ordered them to be torn down. In Kazan, the government blamed opposition parties and tried to close them.

In Moscow, transport officials complained the slogans were too political to be placed on trolley buses. "This reflects the mentality of the authorities," said Ruslan Arifdyanov, from *Kommersant*. "A few simple words like 'Who's the boss?' were seen as mutinous."

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the advertising business has exploded in Russia. It is now turning over about \$1.2bn - a figure which industry insiders expect to grow five-fold within the next six years. Already there are 969 registered advertising companies. Yet Russians frequently regard the phenomenon with hostility. Resentment has swelled among the poor and elderly who dislike living among brash reminders of products they cannot afford. They complain that advertisements are too explicit, particularly television commercials for tampons. When Mr Yeltsin launched a new national channel called Culture TV, it boasted that it was state-funded and advertising-free (so far).

Part of the problem is demographic. As elderly Russians have less spending power than

their Western counterparts, advertisers target the young, churning out hip and sometimes raunchy ads in which scantily clad women regularly appear.

Conservatives in the Orthodox Church have begun co-ordinating efforts to pass restrictive laws through parliament. It is "the propaganda of evil", says Yevgeny Nikiforov, from *Rodnye Zemlye*, a religious radio station and newspaper. "In a legal state people should be free not to be insulted and perverted by others."

The revival of advertising, which first came to Moscow in the 1870s, has come as a shock. In Soviet times, Russians were starved of even basic information about consumer products. Finding out what was on sale, and where, required access to the grapevine and a readiness to stand in queues for hours. People would frequently join a line without knowing what it was for, on the off-chance that the boots, or coats, or hats at the end of it would prove a good investment.

The small amount of Soviet advertising was about as subtle and convincing as the Communist slogans plastered in and outside every school and factory (which urged people to produce rather than consume). In a society without choice, these often seemed absurd. Russians would joke about the ubiquitous "Fly Aeroflot" signs. What other airlines could they fly?

Since then, the industry has become immeasurably more sophisticated. "What we are witnessing is the birth of a new society, a society of consumers," said Sergei Lisovsky, 38, head of the Premiere SV advertising corporation, as he sat in his office, surrounded by the trophies of wealth - sculptures, model galleons, a magnum of champagne.

His company, which handles more than half of Russia's television advertising, played a pivotal role in selling Boris Yeltsin before last year's elections, turning dismal ratings into victory by commanding the airwaves and bombarding the electorate with commercials. It made the president into a milestone in advertising history in his own right: he is the first Russian leader who owes his place in the Kremlin in large part to marketing techniques.

Evidence of Mr Lisovsky's social revolution is abundant, at least in Moscow. The centre is awash with billboards advertising imported cars, cosmetics, electronics, cigarettes, drinks



Photograph: David Kampfner/Impact

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Whitehall computers not ready for millennium 'bomb'

Tax and benefit systems could crash and hospital life support machines fail because of a millennium computer bug for which at least a fifth of government departments are ill-prepared, it emerged yesterday. But the Cabinet minister responsible said everything was under control. From Abrams and Anthony Bevins examine the evidence.

The Government's own deadline for averting year 2000 computer failure has slipped by five months in the past year - and still many departments will be unable to meet it.

Where October 1998 was once set as the final date, now March 1999 is thought soon enough. Yesterday, MPs were told that only four out of five government departments would be ready even by then - but that work was "in hand" and would be done on time.

The problem has arisen because computers' internal clocks often record the date as just two digits - 97, for example - and so will click on to "00" at the millennium as if time had just gone backwards.

The Government's own computing agency has warned that failure will begin in 1999 if everything is not in place by the end of 1998. But David Clark, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, was not worried.

"We have established the measure of the problem and set in hand plans which are realistic and achievable," he told MPs yesterday as he published each department's assessment of its position. Four out of five

plan to be ready for the millennium by March 1999; three out of five by December 1999.

But submissions to Mr Clark show that

even departments' own deadlines are already being missed. The effect on taxation, benefits and other services could be catastrophic if they continue to slip.

The Department of Social Security admitted that tens of thousands of its PCs would not be ready until August 1999. Others which were originally to have been ready by January 1998 will now not be ready until March 1999.

Mr Clark said yesterday that he was confident enough skilled labour was available to do the necessary work. But in its report, the Ministry of Defence said: "Some factors may be beyond the control of systems

managers because of the scarcity of computer specialists." The Lord Chancellor's Department said it had already lost an experienced operator.

Last night Robin Guenier, the head of the Taskforce 2000 group set up by the last government to deal with the problem, said: "This complacency is completely the wrong approach. This whole subject is so serious and it is being taken with such a low degree of urgency that it is extremely worrying."

He also attacked Mr Clark's assertion that the NHS had been excluded from his spending estimates because he was not responsible for it - the minister believes the problem will cost the government £370m to put right but this only covers central departments.

"Someone has got to be responsible for the NHS - it employs hundreds of thousands of people and its budget is going to be absolutely enormous. Where is the money coming from?"

Malcolm Bruce, the Liberal Democrats' Treasury spokesman, said Mr Clark's statement was "complacent and incomplete".

Mr Clark said he believed the Government was taking the problem seriously enough.

Spinning away: the man with no name

Alastair Campbell, the Prime Minister's chief press secretary, went on the record for the first time yesterday to launch reforms of the Whitehall press briefing machine, but announced that he would be remaining anonymous.

The Mountfield Report, which has been accepted by the Prime Minister, says that no names of officials should be reported. The Government wants Mr Campbell to be referred to as "the Prime Minister's official spokesman".

Other Downing Street press spokesmen should be referred to as "an official Downing Street source", said the report.

The Prime Minister's official spokesman said it would not be like the White House where briefings were televised. "It would be wrong to blow up an unselected official as a figure ..."

who I am is less important than the fact that I am the spokesman of the Prime Minister," he said.

He took the precaution of turning up to brief lobby journalists with a tape recorder and a microphone for the first time. A senior *Guardian* journalist, on seeing the microphone, said: "I don't broadcast except for money." A BBC correspondent asked: "does this mean you will never again say 'bollocks'?"

The Prime Minister's official spokesman replied that all his comments would be on the record apart from occasional expletives.

The changes are being introduced to avoid a repeat of the confusion over "spin doctor" briefings about policy on Britain's entry to the single currency.

— Colin Brown



Tory faces, Tory voices: Listening to the opening speeches of the National Conservative Women's annual conference at the Queen Elizabeth II centre in Westminster, London, yesterday

Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

Labour backbenchers show signs of restlessness

MPs sign protest letters - but are they rebels?

More than 80 Labour MPs have signed a private protest about the conduct of Diane Abbott and Ken Livingstone. With 100 MPs opposing the lone-parent child benefit cut in a confidential letter, Anthony Bevins, Political Editor, looks at Labour's 'new protest'.

The Prime Minister and Labour Party managers have decided to take no further action against Diane Abbott and Ken Livingstone for their public protest

over the party's acceptance of a £1m donation from Formula One's Bernie Ecclestone.

Following criticism by Tony Blair's Labour national executive of the two MPs for broadcasting their protest, the issue was again raised at a Wednesday evening meeting of the parliamentary committee when it was revealed that 84 MPs had signed a protest letter about their colleagues' behaviour.

One Labour MP who has seen the Starkey letter said last night that it had been signed by the "Stepford Wives and Milkmen Men"; MPs who, allegedly, slavishly follow the leadership in all things. "I hold no brief for Abbott and Livingstone," the MP said, "but this letter can only be interpreted as an invitation to chuck them out of the Parlia-

mentary Labour Party. As such, it is an insult to parliamentary democracy and the rights of MPs to exercise conscience on matters of public importance."

It is understood that other (legible) signatories include Melanie Johnson, Welwyn Hatfield; Christine McCafferty, Calder Valley; Valerie Davey, Bristol West; Betty Williams, Conwy; Andrew Dismore, Huddersfield; and Syd Rapson, Portsmouth North.

Following whips' pressure on Labour MPs to pull their names off a public Commons motion that criticises Government plans to cut lone-parent child benefit, it was revealed yester-

day that 100 MPs had signed a more discreet protest letter, allegedly organised by Chris Mullin, MP for Sunderland South, to Gordon Brown, Chancellor of the Exchequer.

However, the fact that the MPs have been unwilling to make a public stand suggests that they are very unlikely to press their hostility to a vote against the Government.

The original Commons motion, sponsored by Audrey Wise, Labour MP for Preston, was signed by another 18 MPs on Wednesday, but only half of them were Labour and yet another Labour MP, Midlothian's Eric Clarke, removed his name.

Following whips' pressure on Labour MPs to pull their names off a public Commons motion that criticises Government plans to cut lone-parent child benefit, it was revealed yester-

Commons reports attack Jowell over tobacco sponsorship

Labour MPs last night launched a withering assault on the Government's case for seeking a permanent exemption for Formula One motor racing from a ban on tobacco sponsorship.

Two cross-party committees, both chaired by senior Labour MPs, delivered reports undermining the defence of government policy by Tessa Jowell, the public health minister, who is due to fight Britain's case in the European Union court next week. One committee challenged

the Government's central claim that it was exempting motor racing because it would lead to the loss of 50,000 jobs in Britain. Both reports said all sports should be equally treated.

The decision to rush out the reports will be seen as an attempt to force the Government into a U-turn over its policy at the EU council in Brussels. The *Independent* understands that the Government is preparing a fall-back position to exempt Formula One for 10 years, but

the reports will add weight to EU demands for a compromise which will suit all sports.

Within 24 hours of taking evidence from Ms Jowell, the Commons Select Committee on Health said: "We believe Formula One should be placed under the same pressure as other sports to seek alternative sponsorship." But a more damning verdict was delivered by the cross-party select committee on European legislation, which said the claims by

"deserves closer examination".

The Prime Minister's office said last night that the Government was engaged in negotiations about the EU directive, and said other countries found difficulties in accepting the EU proposals as currently drafted.

However, Ms Jowell has made it clear she wants to secure an agreement, and to avoid Britain being part of a blocking minority, raising expectations of a last-minute compromise.

— Colin Brown

Birmingham and Manchester could acquire powerful elected mayors months before London if they take advantage of new proposals for democracy in the cities of England.

A Green Paper is due in the spring on arrangements for reforming the way decisions are taken in London, but if a private member's Bill introduced yesterday passes quickly, England's other cities could take the first steps down a road which could see powerful individuals elected to represent their interests.

The prospects for change are good. The Government promised to back the Bill introduced by Lord Hunt of Tanworth, which empowers councils to revamp the way they are run. Although some Labour councillors are none too keen on ceding powers to a mayor, the Labour-dominated Local Government Association supporting the measure on the grounds that individual authorities will be left free to decide which arrangements best favour local conditions.

— David Walker

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11/POLITICS



Team work: Pupils and staff at Dalston Youth Project in east London surround Tony Blair during his visit yesterday to see how the project helps divert 11- to 18-year-olds from crime

Photograph: Alastair Grant/AP

Carrot and stick approach to youth crime

A new hybrid sentence, half custody, half community supervision, will be a key element of the Government's drive against youth crime, the Home Secretary announced yesterday.

The length of custodial time under the so-called Detention and Training Orders (DTOs) will be increased or cut down to give offenders an incentive to improve their behaviour.

It is estimated that up to 200 young people aged 12 to 14 could be kept in detention around the country at any one time, at secure training units.

Children aged 12 to 14 awaiting trial, as well as the more vulnerable 15- to 16-year-olds, will be remanded for the first time to secure local authority accommodation, to combat the problem of

bailed youngsters continuing on crime sprees.

Another proposal, unveiled by Jack Straw as part of a White Paper on youth justice, is the concept of a youth panel for first-time young offenders, where the culprits would be "confronted with the damage and human consequences of their crime". Under the idea – still under consultation – the youngster and their parents would have to draw up a good behaviour contract, lasting for up to a year.

Mr Straw told the Commons that his aim was to deliver a youth justice system which prevented youngsters getting involved in offending, as well as punishing those who did. The White Paper, *No More Excuses*, which will form part of next month's Crime and Disorder Bill, will also

attempt to speed up the judicial process.

The White Paper includes plans for local curfew schemes to keep under-10s off the streets, and a new Parenting Order.

Mr Straw added that he was chairing a new ministerial group looking at ways of supporting families more effectively.

As expected, the Government will abolish the rule of *doli incapax*, the presumption that children under 14 cannot commit a criminal act because they cannot distinguish between right and wrong.

Senior police officers welcomed many of the proposals. However, prison campaigners the Howard League warned that the new DTOs would lead to more younger children being locked up.

— Michael Streeter,
Legal Affairs Correspondent

Loophole may leave young unprotected by low-pay law

The Government was accused of putting a loophole in its minimum wage legislation by excluding those under 26 years of age. Colin Brown, Chief Political Correspondent, says

employers face fines of up to £5,000 for breaking the laws designed to help six million workers.

The Minimum Wage Bill was hailed by Margaret Beckett, the President of the Board of Trade, as the "beginning of the end" in poverty pay, but Tory MPs said it paved the way for another Government U-turn.

Clause three of the Bill gives the Government the power to exempt workers aged under 26 from the minimum wage legislation, or to apply a different rate, if it is recommended by the Government's low pay com-

mission, which is due to report in the Spring.

The inclusion of the let-out clause for a large part of the workforce, which is facing low pay, will be seen as a partial victory for Peter Mandelson, the minister without portfolio, who called for flexibility in its operation during the Labour Party conference in October.

Mrs Beckett won her argument that the minimum wage will be the same across the country, but she could be forced to concede the lower rate for younger workers.

While trade union leaders welcomed the Bill as a "landmark", a lower rate for trainees raised some fears it could be used to water down the impact of the Bill. John Edmunds, general secretary of the GMB, said he remained "very concerned" that young workers could be discriminated against.

The Tories, too, were sceptical. "It looks as though the Government is going to do a

complete U-turn. Mrs Beckett is still saying she may not use the powers but it is pretty odd to put such a strong clause three into the Bill if there is no intention of using it," said John Redwood, the Tory spokesman on trade and industry.

The Bill carries strong powers to fine employers breaking the law up to £5,000. But the rate at which the national minimum wage will be fixed will not be known until after the Low Pay Commission reports. Its recommendations will then be considered by the Cabinet.

There is speculation that the final figure could be £3.50, £3.75 an hour, but Mrs Beckett refused to be drawn. She said she was "proud" to bring forward the legislation, which campaigners estimated could boost the pay of six million workers, including low paid homeworkers, domestics, nannies and agency staff.

"It will be a single rate that will apply to all regions, sectors

and size of firm," said Mrs Beckett, adding that the Government was keen to make sure the rate was set as a "sensible" level.

"This is both a very important day and a very proud day because it is the beginning of the end of poverty pay."

The legislation also sets out six new offences aimed at employers who refuse to pay the new wage. These cover refusal or wilful neglect to pay the rate, failure to keep records, or failure to give information to enforcement officers.

Trade minister Ian McCaffery said that most workers will be covered by the new rates, including homeworkers, who can earn at present as little as 35p an hour.

The only people not covered will be the self-employed, people who do a few hours a week voluntary work for groups like the Citizens Advice Bureau, children below school leaving age and prisoners.

Treasury on defensive over tax credit

The Chancellor was forced on the defensive yesterday over his plan for a tax credit for low-paid families. The Treasury insisted that it would not necessarily cost women money, as critics charge. Diane Coyle, Economics Editor, explains the controversy.

Gordon Brown is not committed to ending the independent taxation of women or to abolishing family credit, a senior Treasury adviser said yesterday.

Both steps had been seen as an inevitable result of the introduction of the "working-families tax credit" which Mr Brown signalled in his Green

Budget earlier this week. This allowance would reach low-income tax payers through their pay packet. The Chancellor has portrayed it as a better incentive to work than a benefit family credit.

However, critics have long argued that a tax credit could not work in practice because it would require needs to be assessed on the basis of household rather than individual income.

Otherwise, according to the Institute for Fiscal Studies, higher earners would benefit disproportionately.

That would mean a big tax increase for second earners – mainly women – who would start paying tax on their first pound of earnings. In addition, if the working-families tax credit, which would go to the main

taxpayer, replaced family credit, which is received mainly by mothers, it would involve a transfer of cash from women to men.

Even Treasury officials and advisers have been warning the Chancellor of these potential drawbacks of the scheme, as *The Independent* reported last week.

Yesterday, Ed Balls, a senior economic adviser to the Chancellor, said that the details of the new tax credit would not be decided until after the report of the commission on tax and benefit reform, headed by Martin Taylor, chief executive of Barclays Bank. This is due ahead of next March's Budget.

Mr Balls said: "We are not necessarily going to end the independent taxation of women. It is not an inevitable consequence of the working-families tax credit." The idea of intro-

Zinfandel?

I think it's a mountain in the Alps?

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Spencers' alimony and acrimony

Details of the divorce settlement offered by Earl Spencer to his estranged wife emerged yesterday as papers lodged in court described him as an "intolerant and angry" bully. Steve Bogom examines the claim and counterclaim and hears the response from England.

Earl Spencer has offered his estranged wife a £292,682 settlement, a house worth £244,000, a car, a mooth tax-free income of £2,439 and full maintenance for their four children.

They were the precise details put before the High Court in Cape Town yesterday as the couple's preliminary divorce hearing rumbled into its fourth acrimonious day.

The offer was being regarded in England as

insufficient for a man with a personal

wealth of £6m and a family fortune of £100m.

Details of the offer were given by Shelly-Anne Claircourt, one of the earl's lawyers, who described it as the largest ever made in South Africa. But it is by no means the biggest ever made in England, where Lady Spencer is applying to have the case heard.

"This offer made to Victoria [Lockwood] represents an unprecedented amount for a woman or wife in this country, particularly considering the brevity of this marriage," she said. The couple were married in 1989 and split five years later after Lady Spencer underwent five months of treatment for alcoholism and eating disorders.

It was during her treatment that she claims Earl Spencer had affairs with 12 women. He denies the allegation.

Miss Claircourt said the earl had given an undertaking that Lady Spencer's requirements could be reassessed by an English court should she ever decide to move home from Cape Town, where both parties live at present.

She, however, is pursuing a claim for £3.75m. In support of that, Lady Spencer has submitted a sworn statement to the court in which she describes her husband as a domineering bully who ordered her not to attend the funeral of his sister Diana, Princess of Wales, so he could attend with his latest partner, the model Josie Boraian.

The papers say he became "intolerable and angry and he increasingly criticised, undermined, bullied and belittled me until eventually I lost all confidence and became very scared of him". She claims she is broke, surviving on an overdraft of £5,000.

Nicholas Mostyn, a British barrister specialising in family law, told the court that the earl's alleged extra-marital affairs would have no bearing on a settlement if the case were heard in England. "It takes three to commit adultery," he added. "... it is a symptom of a broken marriage."

In defiance of Earl Spencer, David Horton-Fawkes, a childhood friend and now manager of the earl's British interests, said in a statement that Lady Spencer had been given kind and loving support from the earl, and had written to thank him for it.

"I know that Charles would never treat the mother of his four children in a mean or malicious manner," he said.



Star turn: George Best (second from right), yesterday given second place – after Brazil's Pele – as Greatest Footballer of All Time, being congratulated by (from left) former England goal keeper Gordon Banks, Northern Ireland goal keeper Pat Jennings and Alan Ball; Further Report, Sport, page 31

Photograph: PA

Scare over toy in food

Worries over food which contains toy gifts have finally

surprised the place to which to see the

adventure Mount

plan, on Pitt Island to

the east of New Zealand.

After the maths

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17/TERRORISM

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Spain follows Irish example to peace in Basque Country

An ambitious plan has been put together to bring peace to the Basque Country. Strongly influenced by the Irish example, it seeks to achieve by consensus some of the constitutional changes sought by the armed separatist organisation Eta. Elizabeth Nosh in Madrid examines an initiative which has won supporters across Spain's political spectrum.

A plan has been maturing over two years that seeks to achieve by consensus an extension of Basque rights that could meet some of the demands of the separatist organisation Eta. The plan, details of which are now emerging, has won support among representatives of a wide range of Spanish opinion, including a leading conservative lawyer who was one of the five authors of the post-Franco democratic constitution of 1978.

The proposal, expected to be discussed in the New Year by regional parliaments of both the Basque Country and Navarra, would eventually have to be approved by parliament in Madrid. It is backed by all Basque political parties including the pro-Eta Herri Batasuna (HB) party which has regional MPs in both Vitoria and Pamplona – the Basque and Navarre regional capitals.

Significantly, it has not been rejected by the conservative Interior Minister in Madrid, Jaime Mayor Oreja. This is the first time in 20 years a peace initiative has not been rejected by one or other party interested in resolving the Basque conflict.

This broad range of tolerance has been built around the idea of developing an annex to the 1978 constitution that "respects, protects and adapts" the historical rights exercised by the Basque Country and Navarra in relation to the Spanish crown. Many in Navarra are Basque, and the region is regarded by Basque separatists as part of the Basque homeland they seek to break away from Spain.

The draft bill envisages the creation of "new participatory processes" inspired by the his-

torical rights or "fueros" of the two regions that predate the 1978 constitution but are recognised by it. The proposal could therefore be adopted by consensus within the existing constitutional framework. Interpretation of these rights goes to the root of the Basque conflict, the definition of sovereignty and the relationship between Spain's autonomous regions.

The idea is to create, in the first instance, an all-party working group of regional MPs that would study the matter over the next 12 months, in a process consciously borrowed from the Irish experience of all-party talks.

Crucial to the success of the initiative has been the support of Miguel Herrero de Miñon, a conservative lawyer of enormous prestige throughout Spain who was one of the five drafters of the 1978 Constitution. Don Miguel, as he is known even by Socialists not given to respecting ancient honifics, at one point sought to succeed Manuel Fraga as leader of the Popular Party, but his austere, patrician style was considered insufficiently populist for a party seeking to reinvent itself in the democratic era, and he lost out to Jose Maria Aznar.

The initiative attempts to tidy up some Basque business that the constitution left unresolved, as the annex tacitly recognises. Unlike Galicia and

Should the all-party working group of Basque and Navarre MPs start work early next year, the idea's sponsors believe that Eta would be under enormous pressure to suspend armed actions throughout the year, because its political ally, Herri Batasuna, would be a participant.

A key link that could keep the separatists onside is an understanding reached between the Basque trade union leader Jose Etxorieta and Rafael Diez, leader of the union linked to HB. "This is similar to

Catalonia, who were represented on the constitutional drafting committee, no one spoke up specifically for the Basques. This created a fierce and lasting resentment, reflecting probably the most important defect in a document that has proved remarkably resilient in accommodating the transformations of the last 20 years.

In the referendum on the

what happened between John Hume and Gerry Adams: establishing bridges between sectors that are ideologically close but separated by violence," the Elkarri spokesman said.

"What is on the table is a point of contact, like the Downing Street declaration, that can open the discussion and could produce a new relationship between the Basques and the Spanish crown."



Police clash in Pamplona with supporters of the pro-Eta Herri Batasuna party after Miguel Blanco's murder. Photograph: Desmond Boylan/Reuters

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Have you gone mad? Or is it just a fit of toy rage?

If trying to track down a Teletubby toy this Christmas drives you crazy, just spare a thought for the poor shop assistants, says Ann Treneman.

It was supposed to be a jolly television interview that Santa himself would be proud of. The idea was to get Gerry Masters of the British Association of Toy Retailers to stand in the middle of a store, hold up a few Teletubbies, and chat a bit about the spirit of giving this Christmas season. Sound simple? "The store was horrified! They said there would be a riot and that I would be mobbed by mums grabbing the toys!" says Mr Masters.

In the interest of safety and public order the interview had to be cancelled and, really, Mr Masters should have known better. For this is the year when toy rage – the uncontrollable desire of a parent to act like their two-year-old while in pursuit of a toy – has come into its own. Last year the object of desire was Buzz Lightyear, earlier this year it was virtual pets and now it's Teletubbies. And if you think this is a story driven by hype, then head into any toy store and watch the grown-ups. As they



say in children's books, it's not a pretty sight. "I've heard some people say that their child is dying and that they must get this toy and then it turns out that they are lying. The child isn't dying at all!" said one spokesperson. "It really is shameful, shameful behaviour."

People say that today's parents just do not know how to say no to the kids. They don't have time to play with their children so the toy has become all important. The parents say that television is to blame. As for the television, don't even try to talk

sense to Tinky Winky, Po, Laa Laa and Dipsy. But it does make sense that if you live in a rat race, eventually you start to act like a rat. "Last year the Buzz Lightyear craze got to the point where people were flying to Florida from New York and buying it couriered to Britain," says Mr Masters.

"It's becoming a macho thing. You can dine out on the story for months. The Americans call them 'destination products' and that means that people make a trip to a store specifically for that product and

nothing else." So what does it look like from behind the till when a Destination Shopper bears down on you? There are tales of flying objects, tears and strong language. "One of our staff had a clock thrown at him," said Barry Endridge of The Entertainer group. Malina Patel of Toys Toys Toys in Swiss Cottage in North London says that men are the worst. "You should hear their language. I wonder what they are like as fathers if they'll speak to me like this."

Perhaps, I thought, they would be bet-

ter behaved outside the M25. At The Entertainer in Southampton, I found Stephen Shepherd, who seemed born to manage a toy shop. He is 25 and admits to having three virtual pets and one Teletubby. The latter are in such short supply that even he had to get his Laa Laa at Argos but then traded it via the personal ads, for Po.

"This is it. This is what it is all about!" he says, pulling Po out of a plastic bag that sits inside his desk, inside his office. "I couldn't take it on to the shop floor." This is clearly true, as on the shop floor there

are several parents who admit to making careers out of buying their children the set for Christmas. None, it must be said, are swearing, shouting or kicking. But Stephen Shepherd has no illusions about the ugly scenes to come as the dolls continue to be rationed: "Some people shout. Some burst into tears. You get people who lose their rag and start to swear."

So far he has not seen any actual violence and Mr Shepherd wants to keep it that way. This year he has come up with a "toy rage" course for his staff and a flip chart with lots of facts to convince them that it is worth being empathetic to the customer who is accusing them of being a cheating little liar. "For every customer who complains, twenty six will not. Each customer that complains will tell between eight and sixteen people," he says. So if you resolve the problem, you save a lot more than one customer.

But how do you deal with a toy rager? Listening, empathy, information, he says. Never be false or condescending and never, ever start arguing. "Once you are in an argument," he says, "you will not get out and you won't make them happy."

He sees toy rage as part of the larger frustration of Christmas shopping. In shop after shop, people have to queue and wait to be served. Sometimes, they snap. "People will just accuse you of all sorts of things," he says. "If you say you haven't got the toy, they insist that you must have it somewhere. They immediately think you are trying to lie and hide something. But of course you are not, because we are here to sell."

But surely that is being naive, Mr Shepherd. For you cannot sell what you do not have. The only place many Destination Shoppers will be going over the next month is frustration city. Mr Masters has had an idea for this: free stress balls for all customers, flak jackets and dart guns for all staff. It's the kind of joke you shouldn't make in a store full of toy ragers, though.

From one top cat to another: I could really do with a good spin vet. Any idea who handled Lassie?



Dear Socks,
As the US's First Cat, you must get a lot of fan mail. But since reading your web page on

Tony's laptop, I feel I know you already. And frankly – I could use some advice. I guess you've had plenty of experience of political intrigue? Well, things have come to a pretty pass over on this side of the pond. I've been ousted! Overthrown! A clear case of "coup de chat". The end of an era, that's what it is – Downing Street devoid of its most influential resident in decades. It's a disgrace. I'd send you a *Daily Telegraph*, only it's not entirely savoury after several days in the litter tray. The lies they've been printing about

me – "flea-ridden and rancid" etc. When I got wind of plans to pension me off in some quiet backwater where I could snooze away my dotage and no one would mind my mouthing or having the occasional little accident on the floor I assumed it was a peerage after years of loyal service. Little did I know ...

Rumours of my death, I'm pleased to say, have been greatly exaggerated. I'm having to write this from a top secret location in South West London – though if those bastards think

they can keep me out of the public eye then they're wrong. It's a conspiracy, that's what it is. Started the day they moved in. That special little entrance Tony built into the back door was no cat flap. Turned out it was just so Robin Cook could come and go as he pleased. And when I went to curl up for a bit of a scratch, know what I found in place of my favourite armchair? A bloody mouse mat! And there was me thinking I had a permanent safe seat. Never thought I'd hear myself say this, but I really miss the

Majors. Old JM bringing me kippers back from Brixton. Jealousy, that was the problem. I was the most popular Downing Street resident by a long chalk. Granted, I might have been involved in the odd scandal – but how many MPs can honestly say they've never been tempted to stray? Cherie was the brains behind the operation, of course. She's always made my fur stand on end. That glint in her eye when Rolf Harris did neuterings on *Animal Hospital*. And you should have seen the amount of British

beef she fed me. They were all in on it, you know. That old fox Mandelson. Sly, devious, vain, self-satisfied. OK, so there was a lot for a cat to admire in him ... I didn't take it lying down. I used to leave little dead creatures on the doorstep, but when Tony opened the door to find a couple of stiff owls laid out on the pavement, he just assumed they were friends of his from Oasis. Made no attempt to conceal it from me. "New Labour, New Kitten," I heard the PM say. Bold as brass, promising to "get rid of Fat

Cats". Not that I'm worried. The only way I'm having myself put down is when I'm interviewed by Jeremy Paxman on next week's special, feature-length, letting-the-cat-out-of-the-bag edition of *Newsnight*. Ah – sweet revenge. As you know, it's all a matter of PR. I'm already negotiating to get my life story published in time for Christmas. So – must dash ... the paparazzi are waiting. Do write back (I could really use the number of a good spin vet). Any idea who handled Lassie? Trust me – this country hasn't

heard the last of Old Humph. As Anne said: I'll be back ... Miao for now, Humphrey



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The Independent and Independent on Sunday are giving you the opportunity to experience the opera. In association with The Royal Opera we are offering you 2 tickets for the price of 1 to the Autumn and Winter 1997/98 season. You can choose to see any of three productions - The Merry Widow, The Barber of Seville and Paul Bunyan all showing at the Shaftesbury Theatre.

How to Qualify
For each 2 for 1 ticket application simply collect 3 tokens from the Independent and Independent on Sunday (tokens will be printed every day until Friday 28 November) and telephone: The Royal Opera House box office on either 0171 304 4000 or 0171 379 5399 (lines are open between 10am and 7pm) identifying yourself as an independent reader. If paying by credit card you will be asked to hand in your tokens when you collect your tickets. If paying by cheque please enclose your three tokens (you will be advised of the address when booking). You may apply twice for the offer, collecting 3 tokens per application.



Photograph: Laure Lewis

Paul Bunyan

Offer available 10 11 13 15 17 December

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Paul Bunyan is an American

folk hero of gigantic height

who became the greatest lum-

berjack in history, or so legend

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Bunyan's adventures are an allegory of the development of virgin North America in the pioneer days.

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The Barber of Seville is the first modern comic opera.



Think the unthinkable: think like a woman

From child care to pension plans, Labour's policies for women are a shambles, says Yvonne Roberts.

"Why can't a woman be more like a man?" Professor Higgins asks in *My Fair Lady*. The same petulant question appears to lurk behind each bungled attempt of the New Labour government to devise policies which deal with the female half of the population. Mr Blair and his boys just can't get it right.

And they ought to be ashamed. Some of it is simply a matter of presentation – but none the less insulting for that. The appointment of Harriet Harman as minister for women – but only as a hasty afterthought on the part of Blair. The choice of Joan Ruddock as her junior minister on condition that – a new feminist first – she accept the post without pay since the coffers were allegedly empty.

Much is far more serious. Yesterday, there came the news that the Government was considering abandoning independent taxation and returning to taxation for couples. On Wednesday, Gordon Brown revealed his hastily cobbled together £300m package on after-school clubs for a million children – an attempt to deflect the flak from the cut in lone parent benefits. Clumsily, Brown announced that: "A national childcare strategy ... is now the policy of this country's government..."

Welcome by many in the media, in truth, as measures go, it's the equivalent of a bumper sticker on a car that has yet to be assembled. And most of the female voters in this country know it. What provision is there, for instance, for mothers who work shifts or at weekends or who are studying and can't afford even the most minimal of fees? The offer is for 2 tickets for the price of 1 for each application. Each set of three tokens collected allows you to take advantage of the 2 for 1 offer.

The free ticket may only have a value equal to or less than the purchased ticket. This offer is only valid for the three productions mentioned above. The Royal Opera House standard terms and conditions of purchase apply to this offer. The offer is subject to availability. No cash alternatives will be accepted. The promoters are The Independent and The Royal Opera House.

legislation was published yesterday. The Low Pay Commission which has been hearing evidence is due to report in the spring of next year.

By the time any proposals come into force, the two year pledge to remain within Tory spending limits will no longer apply. Five million earn below £42.60 an hour, two thirds are women. A decent minimum wage – highly unlikely according to the pessimistic forecast of women's organisations and trade unionists – would enable lone parent mothers (whom, on average, earn £3.50 an hour) to avoid the trap now being laid by New Labour's welfare-work thrust.

This is the trap in which a woman escapes from poverty on benefits only to become an exhausted member of the working poor, made even more anxious because she knows that her offspring is subjected to substandard childcare provided by young and inexperienced under-25s who are themselves low paid and undermotivated. This combination results in high staff turnover and further disruption to children who deserve better.

Pensions are an even better illustration. The closing date for submissions to the Government's pension review was earlier this month. The Fawcett Society, the campaign organisation for women, has condemned the review as "a sham", claiming that the Government, in its obsession for all that is "New" has already decided to increase the use of private schemes – a disaster for many women.

The reasons why are explained succinctly by Jay Ginn and Sara Arber, pensions experts at Surrey University. Poor childcare is part of the reason why a woman takes time out from her career. As a result, if she has two children, she receives, over her working lifetime, only 45 per cent of a childfree woman's earnings. This, in turn, substantially reduces her pension. Non-employed housewives have it worse. "In enabling their husbands to participate in the labour market ... (they) forego their own opportunity to earn wages and build state and private pension entitlements," the academics point out. Women form two-thirds of those over 65; only a third of whom have a private pension. Too many of the remainder, particularly those over 75, live in poverty.

Ginn and Arber argue that the assumption that public pensions are un-

affordable is erroneous. The move towards privatisation will exacerbate the "feminisation of poverty". In Denmark, by contrast, a reasonable basic pension is payable on the basis of 40 years residence, at the age of 67. Ginn and Arber argue for such a measure in Britain, set above the level of income support and index linked. In addition, they recommend that membership of a second tier employment-related state pension should be mandatory, with provision made for carers who take time out from work; an end to tax relief on private pensions and a public education campaign to counter the vast advertising budgets of the private pension companies.

"The drive to cut state pensions ... benefit the private pensions and insurance sector rather than workers or pensioners," Ginn and Arber argue. "Where such reforms are adopted, the changes ... bear hardest on women." Anna Coote, part-time adviser to the Government's women's unit and deputy director of the influential Institute of Public Policy Research, frequently talks about how the modern welfare state isn't just about tax and benefit: "It's about services, social values and goals." She refers to a New Dialogue with women which will (belatedly) be initiated next year by the setting up of women's juries to judge government policies.

"The future of the welfare state intricately involves family life and gender roles," she insists. So why do so many of New Labour's thirty-something and single, predominantly male advisers appear so prone to attacks of gender blindness? Do they really lack the imagination to visualise what life is like for the girls? Girls who are increasingly aware how easily a female high flyer can find herself relegated to the low paid, part-time ghetto of forgotten talent once she's opted to become a mother; or left struggling as a single parent – partly because the system remains resolutely fashioned by and for men.

It's damning that a government which is so keen to "think the unthinkable" when it comes to the welfare state, isn't also capable of recognising that unless it tailors policies to the female experience as much as to the male's, it will only exacerbate the inequities and dependency it is pledged to eradicate.

John Lytle is away

£150

19/OBITUARIES

Dale Owen

Ivan Dale Owen, architect; born Merthyr Tydfil, Glamorgan 2 August 1924; married 1964 Maureen Kelly (two sons, and one son deceased); died Penarth, South Glamorgan 12 November 1997.

Dale Owen was a leading figure on the Welsh architectural scene, one of a group of British post-war architects whose approach to the design of buildings and cities was strongly influenced by study and practice in the United States. He was also active in the public life of South Wales and, though he never swerved from the principles of the Bauhaus, was much involved in efforts to protect historic buildings and the landscape of his native Wales.

In the mid-1960s, the colleges of the University of Wales were growing rapidly. Percy Thomas Partnership, for whom Owen was then working, recast the campuses at Swansea, Aberystwyth and Cardiff, where Owen's economics tower was allowed to burst through the hallowed skyline of Cathays Park. The new BBC Wales headquarters in Llandaff, Cardiff, was another major work of the 1960s. Owen recalled with delight his victory over penny-pinching bureaucrats in persuading the corporation to buy real Mies chairs for the reception area.

He valued quality over any issue of style, though he had little time for Post-Modernism and rigorously eschewed the folksy look who designing a new gallery block for the Welsh Folk Museum at St Fagan's – he later extended the building in collaboration with his wife, Maureen, who was also an architect.

Owen was born in Merthyr Tydfil in 1924. He attended Whitchurch Grammar School and went on to the Welsh School of Architecture in 1941. War service between 1943 and 1946 – he was commissioned in the Royal Artillery – took him to the North-West Frontier of India. After completing his professional training in Cardiff and at the London School of Planning, he worked in London and for the Development Corporation of the new town of Cwmbran.

His interest in planning and urban design was strong and in 1954 he went to the United States to study at MIT and Harvard as a research scholar. Walter Gropius, the founder of the Bauhaus, was then the dominant figure at Harvard and Owen spent over a year working for Gropius's practice, the Architects' Collaborative, in Cambridge. Shortly after re-

turning to Britain, he took up a position as a senior architect/planner with William Holford & Partners in London.

It was Sir Percy Thomas, a talented architectural impresario and twice President of the RIBA, who brought him back to Wales. Owen joined the Percy Thomas Partnership in 1958, becoming an associate and then, in 1964, a partner. He was a key figure in the firm, bringing it to an international vision of modern design. The Percy Thomas style was transformed and became uncompromisingly contemporary. Though the practice had expanded beyond Wales, Thomas – for whom Owen maintained an unwavering respect – persuaded his bright young associate to stay in the Principality, where there was much work to be done.

Dale Owen was a passionate Welshman, though he could not – and regretted the fact – speak the language. He could, however, be critical of what he saw as the parochialism and small-mindedness of Wales. He was a good friend to younger architects and unflinchingly backed Zaha Hadid's Cardiff opera-house project, which he considered a work of genius. (The fact that his old practice gained lottery funding, on the day of his death, for a vastly inferior replacement scheme would not have pleased Owen – its role in the matter had dismayed him.) At the time of his death, he was advising Pankaj Patel and Andrew Taylor on a major expansion scheme for the University of Wales, Aberystwyth.

After his retirement from Percy Thomas Partnership in 1994, he set up a consultancy based at his home in Penarth – a delightful 1930s modernist villa stuffed with books and pictures – and his wife, whom he married in 1964, subsequently became his professional partner. One son of the marriage died tragically in 1984 but their two surviving sons delighted their parents by deciding to become architects.

Public and voluntary work took up a good deal of Owen's time in recent years. He served as High Sheriff of South Glamorgan and Deputy Lieutenant, chaired the regional group of the Victorian Society and (a major commitment) the Civic Trust for Wales, and was very active in the building preservation trust movement.

Owen was equally active in professional circles, sitting on the RIBA Council and serving as President of the Society of Architects in Wales in 1977-79. (His wife later became a distinguished incumbent of the office.) He was proud of his work for the United Nations Association and of his appointment as honorary architect to its headquarters, the Temple of Peace in Cardiff, a fine work of the 1930s by his lieber Meister, Percy Thomas, and took as much pleasure in the design of a tiny work – such as a niche in the New Theatre, Cardiff, for a bust of Richard Burton – as in the replanning of an entire district.

Though politically a sceptic, Dale Owen had enormous faith in the power of art and architecture to enhance people's lives.

– Kenneth Powell



Washington: impressive tall, thrown bottle forms with a strong anthropomorphic element

Robert Washington

Robert Johnson Washington, potter and educator; born London 2 May 1918; married 1939 Marjorie Terry (died 1996; one son), 1996 Sue Lapesco (one daughter); died Little Baddow, Essex 17 November 1997.

Robert Washington was as inventive and creative in his teaching as he was in his ceramics.

Ambitious but sensitive, he often felt himself to be in competition with his artist father William, a skilled etcher, draughtsman and silversmith (and later head of Hammersmith School of Art), and became an instructor to the builders of aircraft, a task which called on his understanding of modern engineering as well as his ability to pass on information with clarity and imagination.

In 1939 he married Marjorie Terry, then a highly successful textile designer, who in 1944 gave birth to their son, John.

After the war, Washington resumed teaching ceramics at Derby, making an impression on the students as a conscientious and dedicated lecturer, going on to become principal first of Dewsby and then Margate schools of art. He maintained his own studio too, producing pots under the clear influence of Murray, but with his own idiosyncratic interpretation of the figure, and exhibited in the Festival of Britain.

The department was headed by William State Murray, one of the leading potters in

Britain, an influential and charismatic if sporadic teacher. Murray had firm views about the status of pots, distancing himself from their craft associations and arguing that pots should be seen as fine art, an attitude which seemed entirely right to Washington, one of the liveliest students.

Teaching at Derby College of Art was interrupted by war service, when he studied hydraulics and became an instructor to the builders of aircraft, a task which called on his understanding of modern engineering as well as his ability to pass on information with clarity and imagination.

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Contact was re-established with galleries and in a solo exhibition at Anatol Orient gallery

in London in 1988 he made a comeback with a series of new work consisting of large plates which were inventive in both their imagery and surface treatment. Work was also shown at Paul Rice, London.

A new relationship with a young ceramic student, Sue Lapesco, stimulated his experimental approach to clay, leading him to investigate cratered and textured glazes and to integrate such effects into his ceramics. Much to his delight, four years ago he and Sue had a daughter, Olivia, and following Marjorie's death they were

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Ena Neill

Ena Woof, educationist; born 29 May 1910; married 1933 Bill Wood (one son; marriage dissolved), 1944 A.S. Neill (died 1973; one daughter); died 26 October 1997.

A.S. Neill founded the pioneer progressive school Summerhill in 1921; three years before he died, he said simply to his wife Ena: "You can carry on." And so she did, running the school for 12 years from 1973. She held Summerhill together, fiercely protective of Neill's ideology even though privately, she sometimes disagreed with the way he did things. She was head through difficult times, when freedom for children had dropped out of fashion; the press became ever more determined to find salacious stories to "expose" about Summerhill and the numbers of pupils were low.

The founding principle of Summerhill was, and remains, that children, given freedom to make choices about when they want to learn – lessons have never been compulsory – and a voice in decision-making about the way they live, will grow into happy, motivated, well-adjusted adults. Ena Neill may not have been the philosopher who conceived the idea of the school, but she had a better grasp than her husband of the importance of tempering freedom for children with boundaries and she had no problem with giving a tick-off when children became anarchic rather than free-spirited.

It was she who would risk unpopularity by standing up, her face set, at the weekly school meeting where the process of self-government took place, to berate the whole lot of us if she felt we were letting the school down. The Neills' daughter, Zoe, remembers how hard it could be for Ena: "Lots of people spoke lovingly about Neill, saying how benign he was, how impressive that he could run the school without ever seeming to lose his temper, but that was because he left it to Mum to lay down the law, to be the dragon."

Born Ena Woof, she grew up in West Malling, Kent, and studied nursing before marrying Bill Wood, an illustrator. She

had no formal training in pottery, but developed her skills as an amateur, creating her own distinctive style of hand-thrown, textured, spiky-glazed vessels.

Retirement in 1979 brought fresh opportunities and a renaissance in her work. She had head through difficult times, when freedom for children had dropped out of fashion; the press became ever more determined to find salacious stories to "expose" about Summerhill and the numbers of pupils were low.

She worked extraordinarily hard to make sure the school functioned and things operated as they should – whether it meant ordering the groceries, getting in a plumber, dealing with inspectors or troublesome pupils, or getting a child who had fallen out of a tree and crushed a limb to hospital. To me Ena seemed like a battleship, a powerful and often daunting presence, but there was great security in knowing that, beyond doubt, she was there to care for us, to protect us.

– Angela Neustatter

plight of the Palestinians, it was unfortunately he who became the target of vociferous attacks from British Zionists, who had looked up the name in the London telephone book.

We never met, and friends who knew both of us said that this was perhaps just as well. But, now he is so longer with us, I rather miss him.

Times from Beirut about the

British Academy, he sent me a letter addressed to "Dear John Carswell" telling me the academy had just awarded me a grant of £5,000, and signed "John Carswell". At this point he must surely have become aware of the complications of having an alter ego. In 1967, as I wrote a fervent letter to the

Times from Beirut about the

fall of the Armenians in the 17th century, I did not receive a reply.

Over the years, I had bills

from his wine merchant

and his bootmaker. I also received an invitation to become a member of the Travellers Club, which I accepted with alacrity. I may well be an impostor.

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Spare the risk, and cocoon the child



**SUZANNE
MOORE**
OVER-PROTECTED
CHILDREN

In these punitive times what a breath of fresh air it is to hear someone use the words "children" and "freedom" in the same sentence. Jacqueline Lang, headmistress of an independent school, made a sensible little speech about how we over-protect our children and it has become front page news. That such common sense is deemed newsworthy is an indication of how far we are from absorbing it. We are so used to seeing the word children linked to words such as risk, abuse, curfew that to talk of childhood as a time of excitement and exploration and invigorating risk taking seems outrageous.

This may be because we have been so busy recreating modern childhood in the image of our own added adulthood that we cannot see the damage we are doing. The grown-up complaints of lack of time, of feeling stressed-out, of perceiving the world as an increasingly dangerous place have all been passed on to our offspring. Whereas many people remember the long, slow idling of their own childhoods, the summer holidays that went on for ever and ever, now kids feel as harassed and rushed and anxious as the rest of us.

One of the basic problems always seems to me to be that some parents will not leave their children alone to amuse themselves. The idea of doing nothing is an anathema in our puritanical, work-obsessed culture. So despite the fact that "doing nothing" may be both creative and relaxing, good parenting has in some ways become a frantic activity which involves constantly stimulating the child. These poor creatures, with dark circles under their eyes, cannot flop in front of the TV when they get home from school but must learn to play an instrument, because that is what well-rounded individuals do.

Even babies are not immune to such nappy behaviour. Every toy must be educational, as though play for play's sake were somehow a waste of time; for we implicitly tell our children that what is more important in the balance between work and play is always work. Many toys are no longer what you give children, so that you can get on with whatever it is you want to do, but complicated objects often need adult supervision to make sure they are played with correctly.

As children get older, we begin to worry even more if they appear to be doing nothing. Hanging out, hanging around, those endless hours of sitting on walls and eating chips in the street are now perceived as threats to the very fabric of society. Sure enough, there are some kids who will get into trouble if they are allowed out at all hours, but there are just as many who will not respond well to curfews. Mrs Lang's views are

significant, too, in that she talked of loosening the restrictions on children at a time when the state wants to introduce more and more. School inspectors tutting at Summerhill, proposals for banning the purchase of cigarettes to those under 18, alongside Jack Straw's proposals to overhaul the youth justice system, point to a further regulation of young people. Indeed, adolescents, though avid consumers of the myth of freedom and independence, find themselves more and more financially dependent on their parents. Teenagers, it seems to me, are really not going to get much out of this Government, which is big on their responsibilities but has little to say about their rights.

All of this is done, of course, in the name of caring about our children. The children furred about in cars are often, once they get on the streets, quite a hazard. No one has taught them how to cross a road, as they have been too busy coaching them as to what to say to paedophiles. Yet while we all nod our heads in agreement that it is better for children to walk or use public transport, there is a degree of dishonesty here. If children went to local schools, then there would not be a question about walking to them. If community were really as valued as it is claimed, then we would want our children to live near their schoolmates. Yet when the children of our Prime Minister travel halfway across London, what hope is there that this is a realisable goal?

In making the world a dangerous place, we over-assess the risks to our children and so prevent them from learning how to assess the risks for themselves. The reason that so much drug education does not work is that its emphasis on danger and risk does not tally with young people's actual experiences of drug use. We also forget our own growing-up; we forget how sometimes we learnt right from wrong by doing wrong. We learnt about perverts from teasing them and then running away, we learnt about drugs by taking them and about sex by messing about and, if we were lucky, we learnt about pregnancy and disease and even death through someone else's misfortune and not our own.

Like any parent I would hope that my own kids do not do some of the things I did, though mostly I hope that they will not lie to me as much as I lied to my mother. Yet as my eldest daughter enters the wonderful world of the teenager, I am relieved to see that there is safety in numbers. When she and her friends take the tube to the West End to buy stationery and ice-cream and hang about giggling, this gang of girls has little to fear. They are confident. Why shouldn't I be? They feel that they are un-touchable. I used to feel much the same at their age.

But the great thing of course is that once your child can go about by himself, you have more time too, and you can relax and see that there are probably no more risks than there ever were. What is more, you may have to admit that a life without risk is a kind of half-life. Another reason that Mrs Lang's speech was so refreshing was because to share her view, you need a kind of faith in children, a belief that they will be OK in the end.

Instead too many of us are afraid of what we have produced, scared of what our kids may turn into. Our fear of our own future circumscribes their present. Surely though the kids are all right and, as Simone de Beauvoir once wrote, "It is not a question of stopping the movement of life; it is a question of fulfilling it."



Tony and Gordon: the continuing saga of a beautiful friendship



**DONALD
MACINTYRE**
POLITICAL
RELATIONSHIPS

Gordon Brown is on a roll. If you doubt for a second how formidable a politician the Chancellor is, consider how he managed this week to delight his party – by playing Santa to the pensioners – without even momentarily arresting the growth of his "Iron laddie" reputation in the markets. There was lavish personal praise for his "Green Budget" – especially in the daily diet of the Labour Party faithful, the *Daily Mirror* and the *Guardian*. Amid all the fulsome coverage there was just a hint that Brown is a radical in a way that Tony Blair isn't – that it is the Treasury rather than at Number 10 that the true Labour flame is really burning. And now what's this? A *Daily Telegraph* interview which while laying heavy emphasis on the Chancellor's dark, brooding good looks, his tentative marriage plans, his undoubted attractiveness to women, elicits some mildly contentious answers. No, he doesn't like the term (promoted by some in the Blair circle) "rebranding of Britain". And no, he isn't up for "all this touchy-feely stuff". What's that?

Given that background, you

need to distinguish between Brown's relations with Blair, and that between some of Brown's friends and some of Blair's. The two men see and telephone each other daily, sometimes as often as three times a day. This makes the relationship more mysterious and wide-ranging than any other in politics. But it also makes it closer, Brown and Blair know each other at least as well as they know most of their own entourages.

This may sound like nippeting Kremlinology gone mad. Nevertheless the question matters because this is by a long way the most important alliance in public life. History will show, surely, that this is in the big league of deeply influential political relationships, ooo with – say – Asquith-Lloyd George or Bevin-Attlee. So to understand what's going on, and to take the measure of the bitternesses and antagonisms that undoubtedly surface from time to time among some of the acolytes of both men, it's necessary to understand it a little better.

The first point is the familiarity, born of daily, intensive contact since the 1980s. Brown and Blair came into government already knowing each other better than most politicians get to know each other through their whole career. They wrote each other's speeches. Blair's most famous slogan as Shadow Home Secretary "tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime" had been invented by Brown and unquestioningly offered to his colleague. The push immediately after the 1992 election for Labour to shed its union-dominated and tax-and-spending past had been forged jointly, in endless discussions between the two men in one or other of their adjacent offices. And while Brown had of course desperately wanted to succeed John Smith, the fundamental ideas on which Blair campaigned for the leadership in 1994 had a shared copyright.

This doesn't, of course, mean they are not different people. Or that there are not sharp and important disagreements. Blair rejected the 50 per cent top rate of tax proposed by Brown, and insisted on an EMU referendum pledge. Equally Blair took some persuading that a cut in MIRAS in last summer's budget was sensible. But this last is an instructive case. Apparently, Brown returned to the Treasury, having discussed the issue with Blair, feeling that the Prime Minister had had the last word. It was only when officials persuaded

the Chancellor to have another go that he reopened the issue with Number 10. In other words Brown behaved precisely like a loyal Chancellor with a recognition of Blair's role as the First Lord of the Treasury. It says a lot for Brown's towering position in the Government that this should seem almost counter-intuitive. It is easy to make myths: and one is that Brown has never, deep in his heart, accepted that he, and not Blair, became leader. Some of his opponents appear to think so. But that doesn't make it true.

And those very disagreements occur in the ebb and flow of endless conversation between two politicians with shared values and experience. Margaret Thatcher once claimed that she didn't know Nigel Lawson was shadowing the Deutschmark until she read about in the *Financial Times*.

You can't, given the frequency of contact between the two men, ever imagine Blair being in a similar position. Civil servants quite often complain in private that Blair and Brown have too many meetings together in which officials are not present, or telephone calls in which there is not a civil servant listening on the line. They may have a point; one consequence is that decisions are not always easily understood by the officials who have to implement them. But it also means that disagreements don't so often become institutionalised as familiar set-piece territorial battles between Number 10 and the Treasury. As an origi-

nally distinctly untrusting Brown takes more officials – such as the monetary policy permanent secretary Sir Nigel Wicks and his own recent appointee Gus O'Donnell – into his confidence that may anyway start to change. But the one-to-one meetings aren't going to stop, however much some officials would prefer them to.

In the run-up to John Smith's death, there was a triangle of the three most active modernising politicians in the Labour Party: Gordon Brown, Tony Blair and Peter Mandelson. Since Blair became leader only one side of this triangular relationship has fractured, that between Brown and Mandelson.

Maybe the Brown-Blair relationship does defy gravity; didn't Lloyd George after all bleakly say that there was no friendship at the top? But they would need each other even if they didn't like each other.

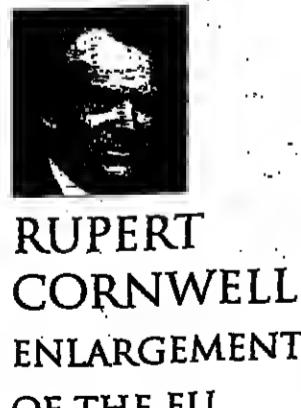
Brown's strategic clarity and modernising drive have been crucial to Blair; Blair has re-connected the party with the electorate, and he remains what Britain voted for on 1 May.

Brown is a restless, driven politician who certainly still wants to be prime minister. He may yet, in time, become so; perhaps precisely as Callaghan did when Wilson went in 1976.

But he also knows that his success is intimately bound to Blair's. Nothing can be sure; the relationship could in time go sour. But it hasn't happened yet.

And until it does, it still remains the most potent political axis of modern times.

The single currency is easy – a bigger challenge is coming



**RUPERT
CORNWELL**
ENLARGEMENT
OF THE EU

It has been pretty heady stuff. Our esteemed Foreign Secretary touring the ancient capitals of *MmeEurope* this week, dismissing the 45 years of the continent's division during the Cold War as aberration, and proclaiming that Britain will be a leader in the great enterprise of reuniting Europe for ever. For that is the true meaning of the next phase of EU enlargement: restoring Warsaw, Prague, Budapest and the rest to their rightful places in the European fold. How right Robin Cook was, to warn of the risk of replacing the Iron Curtain with a velvet curtain that would leave those countries not considered this time around feeling like second-class citizens. Equally correctly, he insists that all 11 original applicants (including even the peculiarly problematic Turkey) and not just the six probable first wave candidates – Cyprus, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Estonia and Slovenia – be invited to the Buckingham Palace conference in February where Britain, holder of the EU Presidency for the first half of 1998, will give a "flying start" to the enlargement marathon.

That though will be the easy bit. The nitty-gritty negotiations to marry the rich economies of Western Europe with their formerly Communist and much poorer Eastern sisters

will be tough enough. At least as hard, however, will prove the task of reforming the Union as it currently exists. For the simple truth, which to his further credit Mr Cook also pointed out, is that before Europe takes new members aboard, it must first put its own house in order.

Basically, the European Union is still run according to the rules laid down in the Treaty of Rome which set up the original European Economic Community in 1957. Since then the Six have become Nine, 10, 12 and now 15. Along the way, structures and policies have been periodically tinkered with. For 40 years, the engine has just about kept on the rails, albeit grinding ahead more slowly with each new carriage that has been hitched to it. But a Europe of 21, not to mention one of 26, will surely drive our wheezing 40-year-old model into overdue retirement. For an expanded Europe to function at all, changes will be required across the board – from the Common Agricultural Policy and the allocation of regional subsidies, and above all in the EU's institutions. And these changes, at least as much as the other great project of the hour, the single currency, will reveal just how supranational the future Europe will be.

Take the Brussels Commission, the EU's ideas factory, ex-

ecutive and mediator rolled into one. With 20 members, it is already too big now.

Enlargement, implying at least six extra Commissioners, would render it even more unwieldy and incapable of decision-making. If it is to be streamlined to say 10, countries would have to drop their claim to at least one Commissioner apiece. The best solution would be a Commission president approved by all member governments who then picks his own team – either without regard to nationality, or on a loose regional basis.

Ditto the Council of Ministers, the ultimate seat of power in the EU, whose chair Britain assumes in January. Already the Presidency is a massive organisational burden for smaller countries, and the case for groups of countries sharing the task becomes steadily stronger. And Mr Cook's grandiloquent undertakings this week do not mask another problem. Britain will be running the show for only six months, and will not have another turn until 2004 or 2005. In the meantime other countries, some of them undoubtedly less keen on enlargement, will be in charge. What price then a long-forgotten "flying start" at Buckingham Palace?

Then there is the matter of the extension of majority voting, something European lead-

ers singularly failed to agree at their Amsterdam summit in June. The current right of veto to protect "vital national interests" already means progress is arduous enough. An unreformed Europe of 21 or 26 – even one day 30 or more – would resemble the UN without the Security Council. Something has to give, if the institution is to continue to function. The choice lies between some form of weighted majority voting that is binding or, more probably, a generalised right of "opt out" – in other words a multi-speed Europe in which the convoy need not move at the speed of the slowest ship, and where on particular voyages, some ships need not leave harbour at all.

This is precisely what is happening with the single currency. However debatable the euro's economic merits, it is a vastly simpler project than enlargement. Why? For one thing, it will have at most 11 members running the show for only six months, and will not have another turn until 2004 or 2005. In the meantime other countries, some of them undoubtedly less keen on enlargement, will be in charge. What price then a long-forgotten "flying start" at Buckingham Palace?

Such are the preconditions of successful EU expansion. Ultimately of course the option remains of doing nothing, of giving the negotiations a rousing ceremonial send-off in London, and then quietly ensuring they go nowhere. But as Mr Cook's talking this week underlines, that would be worse than finking the issue. It would be a betrayal.

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King Des lowers the divi and lifts the spirits


OUTLOOK
 ON CHANGES AT
 UNITED UTILITIES.
 THE MONETARY
 POLICY COMMITTEE
 AND THE BID
 FOR REDLAND

King Des is going. Long live the share raling. There are few more telling illustrations of the way things are changing at United Utilities than the decision to abandon its hopelessly optimistic dividend policy. The shares have underperformed the market almost from the day Sir Desmond Pitcher decided water and electricity did indeed mix. Before yesterday's announcement they were yielding a fat 6.7 per cent – way above the sector average.

The yield told the story. The City reluctantly swallowed Sir Des's multi-utility vision when North West Water soaked up Norweh two years ago. But no one really believed he could sustain year-on-year dividend increases of 11 per cent without draining the balance sheet to the point of collapse. Hence the loss of confidence and United's discount to the market. Throwing a chief executive overboard and adding gas and telecoms to the mix did not help sentiment either.

Now that Sir Des has a departure date and a successor in the shape of Sir Christopher Harding, it is safe to admit that the strategy is not quite everything it was cracked up to be.

Henceforth, the dividend will rise by a more prosaic 6 per cent in real terms in line with the returns that are actually capable of being delivered. For that the management deserves some credit and the market duly rewarded it yesterday, hoisting United's shares by 7 per cent.

But the lessons should not be lost. United Utilities always looked like a piece of

empire building gone mad. Once the cost savings had been wrong out of the business and passed on to shareholders, the multi-utility strategy was always going to struggle to find an encor.

There are plenty of scapegoats to hand for United's less-than-thrilling performance and a collection of them were put on parade yesterday – the windfall tax, beastly utility regulators and the failure of its overseas operations to generate decent profits.

Unfortunately these are all factors which should have been taken into account. United concentrated on how a combination of water and electricity would halve operating costs and conveniently ignored the fact that it was also doubling its regulatory risk.

Now that the chickens are coming home to roost, it will be someone else's problem. The new chief executive, Derek Green, intends to jump ship once the water and electricity regulators have completed their forthcoming price reviews. He calculates that the combined hit to the bottom line will be £100m which probably dashes any chance of a return to a progressive dividend policy. Sir Christopher will have fun finding a replacement chief executive when he arrives next April.

Setting rates is not an exact science

There's no pleasing all the people all the time. While carefully avoiding any prob-

ing of the possibility that the Monetary Policy Committee has been split over its decision to raise interest rates for a fifth time last month, Eddie George managed to demonstrate yesterday that setting rates is a matter of judgement over which reasonable people can and do disagree.

He was handed the opportunity when questioned by the Treasury Committee about the forecast for growth and inflation in Gordon Brown's Green Budget this week. The Chancellor is more optimistic than the Bank about growth next year but less optimistic about inflation and clearly feels there is enough momentum in the economy to encourage the Bank to hoist the cost of borrowing again in the new year. Mr George had no trouble agreeing forthrightly with this analysis.

The MPs, however, had already grilled the Bank's witnesses about whether the last rate rise was a move too far.

Did it not ignore the suffering of exporters under the burden of the strong pound? Had the Monetary Policy Committee not been split about the decision because some thought the economy had already slowed enough for inflation to be on target two years or so ahead?

It could not have been made clearer that setting interest rates is not an exact science.

As MPC member Willem Buiter put it, interest rates work on inflation "gradually and imprecisely" by making it more expensive for businesses and households to borrow, and by damping external demand through a stronger pound.

This is a useful lesson for the Bank to spell out. The new arrangements, whereby rates are set by an independent committee, will quite often lead to splits and disagreements – if they are doing their job properly.

If rates were far from where they needed to be, it would be easy for reasonable people to agree what to do. It is if they have got it almost right that they will disagree on the next move.

No doubt there will be much excitement when we get from minutes of the MPC meeting the first hard proof of a divergence of opinion. But remember: it is a sign the system is working well, not that it is failing. After all, Mr George and Gordon Brown certainly seem to differ.

French get a sense of déjà vu

If the French have any sense of irony, then Lafarge cannot fail to smile at the unexpected attempt by the UK competition authorities to wrest back from Brussels the responsibility for vetting one tiny detail of its Redland takeover.

Five years ago when Redland was stalking Steetley (the acquisition, incidentally, that began its downfall) UK authorities intervened in a similar fashion.

In an attempt to fight off the aggressor, Steetley agreed to merge its building materials business with those of Tarmac. The UK authorities persuaded

Brussels that they were the relevant competition authority to examine the deal and promptly blocked it, allowing Redland-Steetley to sail through the Brussels competition authorities unopposed.

The Industry Minister John Battle has now decided that Lafarge-Redland merits the once over by the Office of Fair Trading because it will give the combined group a stranglehold over the ready mixed concrete markets in Leicester and Norwich.

These are what are known in the parlance of the anti-trust hustlers as distinct markets.

It is hard to see this being a showstopper, however. The local monopoly arises only because Lafarge acquired a small aggregates business, Ennemix, last year for £8m from under Redland's nose.

Presumably it would have no hesitation in disposing of the business to gain regulatory clearance.

Approval in Europe, however, could prove more complicated because the combined business would emerge with 18 per cent of the French aggregates market.

The French themselves are probably not bothered, even if it means hefty job losses in France. That means Brussels will probably not get too excited either.

But what a reversal of fortunes it would if Lafarge were given the green light in Britain but not in Europe. Admittedly, it looks unlikely turn of events but stranger things have happened at sea.

United Utilities to reduce dividends as part of programme to cut costs

United Utilities, the water and electricity supplier for the Northwest, yesterday conceded it was not capable of delivering the financial returns to shareholders and customers that had been promised. As Michael Horison reports, the decision to curb dividend increases and consumer rebates is a blow to Sir Desmond Pitcher, the outgoing chairman and architect of the ambitious multi-utility strategy.

The company has decided to reduce annual real dividend growth to 6 per cent compared with the 11 per cent that investors were promised when North West Water and Norweh merged two years ago. United

is also cutting the level of customer rebates under its "Progress with Responsibility" campaign.

The decision follows a five-month business review by the new chief executive, Derek Green, which will also see further cost-cutting and a more cautious approach to developing its unregulated activities.

United hopes the review will draw a line under a torrid two years of share price underperformance and boardroom battle culminating in the ousting of Brian Staples, its former chief executive, in July. Mr Staples is suing the company and taking it to an industrial tribunal hearing, scheduled for the end of the year.

Mr Green said that had the dividend increases remained at the higher level then the company's balance sheet would not have been able to cope.

The City reacted positively, marking United's shares up 52p to 777p, a 6 per cent increase, as analysts concluded that the group's dividend pol-

icy was now credible and sustainable.

Mr Green maintained that the multi-utility strategy, which also takes in gas and telecoms, remained "cohesive" but conceded: "Expectations were raised that outstripped the ability of the strategy to deliver."

Mr Green rebuffed suggestions that this was an indictment of Sir Desmond, who is known in the City as "King Des" and retires as chairman next March to be succeeded by Sir Christopher Harding, chairman of Legal & General. But he added: "We cannot absolve ourselves of responsibility and by that I mean the royal we."

United said the cost savings it had targeted at the time of the merger, £145m a year by 1999 and £474m in total, had been achieved through the programme of 1,500 job cuts. It has identified additional annual savings of £40m.

But Mr Green said its international and facilities management divisions had not delivered the profits at the

rate expected. It had also been knocked off course by the windfall tax, the electricity supply review and the prospect of a further savage attack on water and electricity charges when simultaneous price reviews take place in two years' time.

United estimates that the two forthcoming price reviews could knock £100m off its profits. Had the payout been kept at the higher level then dividend cover would have fallen below acceptable levels.

In line with the modified policy, the increase in the payout for the first half has been cut to 9.7 per cent, giving an interim dividend of 13.16p. Profits before tax for the period were up 4 per cent to £233.6m.

Although customers will still receive a rebate, it is being cut from £10 last year to £6.50 next year. Mr Green said that if shareholders were going to get lower dividends then customers had to share some of the pain.

Mr Green said the review had concluded it would be more difficult to deliver sub-



Sir Desmond Pitcher: will retire as chairman next March

stantial profit growth from its regulated water and electricity distribution businesses while the non-regulated businesses were not living up to expectations because of "lack of sufficient focus in the application of the strategy". United was forced to take an £83m exceptional charge against a sewage contract in Bangkok and overall operating profits from the international division are just £1.9m.

Two water companies, Yorkshire Water and Wesser Water, yesterday unveiled double-digit increases in dividends to shareholders, despite recent concern at bumper payouts by Ian Byatt, the industry regulator.

Yorkshire raised its half yearly dividend by 20.6 per cent to 6.15p, compared with a 5.8 per cent rise in profits in the six months to the end of September to £115.7m.

Brandon Gough, Yorkshire's chairman, said the increase was inflated by this year's share buy-back and the underlying dividend rise was a modest 11 per cent, though he admitted this was at the top end of the company's own target.

"This is entirely justifiable. We've been under-distributing to shareholders historically and our dividend cover was too high."

He added that the main regulated water and sewerage business had raised its internal dividend to the quoted holding company by only 5.5 per cent.

Wesser hiked its dividend by 14 per cent to 6.5p, while re-

Water companies boost dividends despite regulator's concerns

vealing a £3m fall in profits to £72.1m, at the bottom end of expectations.

Despite the payout, Wesser raised expectations of a big acquisition or further share buy-back.

"We have the firepower in our balance sheet," said Nicholas Hood, chairman.

Shares in Wesser fell 2 per cent on the figures, dropping 11p to 495p.

Analysts were disappointed with a fall in profits at Wesser's non-regulated joint venture waste business, UK Waste.

Mr Hood blamed the decline on a plunge in prices for recycled waste.

He denied that hefty dividend rises increased the potential for big cuts in charges in the next five-year industry price formula from 2000.

Mr Byatt has pledged to deliver a substantial one-off price cut for customers. But Mr Hood said the new price formula should reflect Wesser's reputation as one of the most efficient water groups.

– Chris Godsmark

PowerGen faces £39m pension bill

PowerGen is facing a £39m bill from its company pension scheme in the latest twist to the long-running row over the use of pension fund surpluses in the privatised power industry. Chris Godsmark, Business Correspondent, reports on claims that PowerGen breached new rules which safeguard pension fund assets.

The setback for PowerGen follows the unsuccessful legal challenge earlier this year by National Grid and National Power pensioners, who claimed the company had acted unlawfully when they used pension

fund surpluses to help fund redundancy payments after privatisation.

Though the judge ruled against the pensioners, he also questioned the way National Power had spread the extra pensions cost of its redundancy programme by paying money into its fund in installments.

National Power reduced the cost to the company by offsetting any outstanding cash due against huge surpluses in its pension fund identified by actuaries each year.

It has since emerged that a further 10 power companies, including PowerGen, also used installments to spread their redundancy costs.

This policy has been challenged by Coopers & Lybrand, auditors to the PowerGen scheme and the Electricity Supply Pension Scheme, the in-

dustry-wide umbrella fund created at privatisation.

The annual report of the PowerGen fund, which has just been published, says £39.1m of payments were outstanding at the end of March because of the way the company had spread the cost. The new advice by Coopers means the company could be forced to repay the cash as a lump sum, rather than offsetting the liability against any surplus discovered at the next valuation in April 1998.

The 11 companies affected by the auditors' ruling, including National Power and PowerGen, could have to pay a total of £15m into their pension funds. However, PowerGen has the biggest deficit to make up.

Coopers said the latest legal advice argued that the company should have consulted the pension fund trustees before de-

Chancellor wants even higher interest rates, Bank says

The Governor of the Bank of England admitted yesterday that the Chancellor of the Exchequer thinks interest rates have not risen far enough. He defended the Bank against accusations that it had not pushed rates higher as well as counter-charges that last month's rate rise was unnecessary. Diane Coyle, Economics Editor, reports on the monetary policy balancing act.

Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, and other members of the Mon-

etary Policy Committee (MPC) faced a grilling from MPs yesterday over whether they had ignored exports and growth when setting interest rates.

Yet quizzed over the Treasury's forecast for the inflation outlook over the next year, published in this week's Green Budget, Mr George highlighted the Chancellor's more pessimistic view. Asked whether he thought the forecast meant Gordon Brown foresaw further interest rate rises, he replied: "I think it clearly does."

The Governor also agreed that the new Government had inherited too loose an interest rate policy. "I think that was transparent in the advice we gave the new Chancellor," he said.

But members of the MPC refused to be drawn on whether they would increase the cost of borrowing again if growth turned out to be higher than they expected. Much of the Treasury Committee's session on the Bank's recent Inflation Report focused on whether the MPC had paid enough attention to the weakness of industry as a result of the strong pound.

Mr George defended the Bank's record. "Subject to the inflation target we have to take account of other objectives of government policy, one of which is not to screw down the export sector unnecessarily," he said.

He said the strength of sterling explained the tactical decision to move interest rates in steps of only a quarter point at a time, even though the MPC had thought that further increases would probably be necessary.



– Chris Godsmark

25/BUSINESS

Nationwide suggests housing market 'coming off the boil'

More evidence that the economy could be heading for a soft landing emerged yesterday as figures released by Nationwide suggested the housing market was coming off the boil. Lee Paterson reports.

Housing prices are past their peak, according to data released by Nationwide, the building society. Prices rose by just 0.5 per cent between October and November, one of the smallest month-on-month increases this year.

Dr Paul Sanderson, head of research at Nationwide, said:

M&S links up with Just Jeans to open store in Australia

Marks & Spencer is to open its first store in Australia late next year in a surprise link-up with antipodean retailer Just Jeans. It will concentrate on opening branches in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. Paul Smith, chief executive of M&S in the Asia-Pacific region, said the creative jeans company, which was founded in 1970 and now runs 500 stores, would provide vital experience of the local retail market. M&S said it believed the expansion would create 6,000 new jobs. Further new stores are expected as part of a £2.1bn global expansion announced earlier this month.

LE launches 'dual fuel' offer

London Electricity yesterday announced the latest so-called "dual fuel" offer for customers, giving extra discounts to households which buy both electricity and gas from the company in the emerging competitive domestic energy markets. London said its gas offer could knock up to £150 off bills compared with British Gas tariffs. Mike Bemis, chief executive, also said customers who opted to buy gas would gain further discounts on their power bills. These linked offers are being investigated by Ofgas, the industry watchdog.

Morris float to raise £10m

The boom in house-building and the surge in profits across the sector is bringing Morris group, an upmarket housebuilder based in the North-west, to the stock market. The float will raise £10m and value the company at £25m. Dealings are expected to start on 17 December. In the year to 31 March the group sold 304 houses and made an operating profit of more than £3m on sales of £23m.

BAA makes shortlist

BAA, the group which owns Heathrow and Gatwick airports, has been short-listed in the bidding war to take a 20 per cent stake in the state-owned company which operates nine of South Africa's airports. The winning bidder for the stake in Airports Company of South Africa would also receive an option to buy a further 10 per cent shareholding. BAA is thought to be one of six groups short-listed as a pre-qualified bidder out of 10 original applicants. BAA said the bidding was still at an early stage and a decision was not expected until at least next spring.

Johnson Matthey profits up

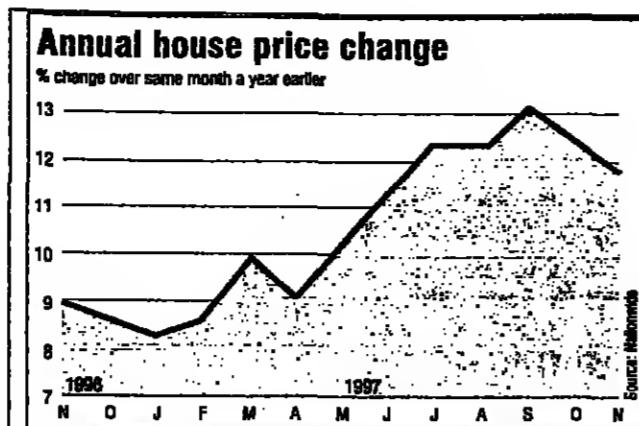
Shares in Johnson Matthey, the metal refiners and makers of catalytic systems and electronic materials for the semi-conductor business, which touched a peak of 694p last month, recovered 30.5p to 553p yesterday after the group produced better-than-expected profits of £5.2m in the six months to the end of September, up 14 per cent on a year previously. Profits in the three wholly owned divisions were up 30 per cent, helped by a rebound in demand for memory chips and higher margins from the new generation of catalytic converters, but the joint venture, Cookson Matthey Ceramics, saw profits slump 53 per cent to £5m.

APC shares gain on figures

Shares in Advanced Power Components, which designs and makes components for the telecommunications industry, gained 7.5p to 72.5p after reporting profits of £885,000 on sales of £5.28m in its first year as a quoted company. Reduced demand for the company's own products has been balanced by an improvement in the component distribution business.

Company Results			
	Turnover (£)	Pre-tax £	EPS
Barclays (F)	549.7m (511.9m)	60.4m (24.3m)	37.3p (12.8p)
BFS (F)	659.7m (729.7m)	89.0m (10.8m)	11.5p (14.3p)
Brockenhurst Ridge (F)	14.1m (13.8m)	4.2m (3.8m)	0.3p (0.4p)
Calicochase Assets (F)	31.5m (28.1m)	22.4m (23.8m)	17.0p (17.7p)
Cheviot Trust (F)	4.3m (3.3m)	0.997m (0.916m)	4.2p (4.0p)
Concordia (F)	90.5m (82.3m)	3.93m (10.7m)	8.47p (13.52p)
CPA Arrows (F)	17.9m (16.4m)	1.4m (1.5m)	7.4p (7.6p)
Darrenway (F)	129.9m (106.1m)	30.338m (25.504m)	90.25p (75.00p)
High-Pak (4th quarter)	44.0m (41.2m)	13.684m (10.833m)	21.6p (3.8p)
Johnson Matthey (F)	1.30 (1.28)	58.2m (51.2m)	52.1p (47.7p)
MAG Group (F)	- (-)	67.4m (45.9m)	61.5p (52.2p)
Kroll Systems (F)	19.3m (19.8m)	3.58m (3.243m)	18.8p (17.5p)
LIB (F)	155.6m (158.1m)	10.8m (1.3m)	4.0p (0.5p)
Metrairex India (F)	8.3m (6.1m)	0.821m (0.779m)	1.67p (0.56p)
Norsemont (F)	14.0m (13.5m)	0.828m (0.756m)	0.4p (0.38p)
Royal Bank of Scotland (F) - (-)	780.0m (695.0m)	55.4p (54.0p)	21.4p (18.6p)
SI (F)	225.7m (198.3m)	3.5p (2.5p)	3.9p (3.5p)
Satellite Speaker (F)	24.7m (37.0m)	2.31m (2.65m)	1.231p (1.35p)
Sybase (F)	39.3m (39.4m)	2.005m (2.25m)	5.14p (6.78p)
Symonds (F)	22.0m (12.75m)	0.084m (1.82m)	1.88p (2.23p)
Tenaris (F)	15.5m (7.1m)	0.921m (1.915m)	0.11p (0.10p)
United Utilities (F)	1.00 (1.00)	23.3m (22.0m)	42.0p (40.8p)
Wessex Water (F)	131.0m (128.9m)	72.1m (75.5m)	26.4p (27.1m)
Waterfront and Docks (F)	275.6m (249.6m)	43.00m (43.04m)	43.8p (45.7p)
Yorkshire Water (F)	322.5m (310.9m)	115.7m (100.4m)	8.7p (6.5p)

VF - Final (F) - Interim



UK authorities to look at Lafarge bid for Redland

John Battle, the energy minister, yesterday surprised Lafarge by signalling that the UK competition authorities wanted to launch a full-scale enquiry into the French building group's £1.8bn takeover for

British rival Redland. Andrew Yates finds that the move is unlikely to derail the deal.

allow the UK competition authorities to scrutinise the bid, following a recommendation from the Director General of Fair Trading.

The move came just hours before Lafarge confirmed it had won control of Redland by increasing its stake in the group to more than 50 per cent from just under 30 per cent.

The Office of Fair Trading (OFT) is understood to be concerned about Lafarge's monopoly over the ready mix concrete market in Norwich and Leicester.

Lafarge already has a large presence in the area, having acquired Ennemix, a local quarry

group, last year in its first move into the UK market. With Redland it will have a stranglehold over part of the Midlands ready mix concrete market.

Analysts believe that Lafarge may be forced to dispose of all or part of the Ennemix business. However Lafarge yesterday insisted that Mr Battle's decision would not scupper its takeover bid. A Lafarge executive said the request was the "usual procedure and raises no difficulties for the public offer for Redland".

The Lafarge bid could lead to temporary overlaps in one or two places in certain markets following the Redland acquisition but Lafarge was ready to talk to Britain's Office of Fair Trading, he added.

One source said that Lafarge was understood to be willing to dispose of Ennemix in order to get the deal past the competition authorities.

Lafarge faces greater competition concerns in France.

Post the deal it will control about 18 per cent of the French building materials market. It is also likely to have to restructure Redland's troubled French aggregates business which could lead to redundancies, a move that could lead to problems with the French authorities.

However analysts believe that the EU may just call for small-scale, local disposals.

Mr Battle's move mystified City observers. One analyst said: "I can't for the life of me see why he [Mr Battle] has done this. There are no real competition concerns. Lafarge have hardly anything in the UK."

Lafarge won control of Redland after upping its cash offer from 320p to 345p. The European Commission refused to comment on the bid yesterday.

Outlook, page 23

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THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY ANDREW YATES

W&D decides to stop the rot

Investors in Wolverhampton and Dudley must be tempted to head down to the pub for a stiff drink to drown their sorrows.

In the past few months, shares in the Midlands brewer and pub group have slumped alarmingly. The stock has fallen from 705p to 457.5p, despite recovering 6p yesterday.

W&D's main problem has been the

mer and it is easy to see why W&D's profits for the year to September remained flat at £43.1m.

W&D has decided to stop the rot by admitting failure and reining back on its spending programme.

Given its past record, it has sensibly decided to use the extra cash to buy back up to 15 per cent of its shares. The share buy-back should enhance earnings and help steady the share price.

W&D has also been able to get rid of some of its worst tenanted pubs and it has some scope to edge up margins

However the shares will not start to look attractive until W&D proves it can start producing acceptable returns on its investment.

Market warms to Berisford

Things are starting to look up at Berisford, Alan Bowkett's Magnet kitchens and Welbilt ovens group, after a disastrous 1996.

A strike in the Magnet factory in Darlington has been sorted out and the systems problems in the US are also a thing of the past. Though the pain of the profits warning will linger, the company put on the style yesterday with a rebound in profits, which soared by 47 per cent before exceptional items to £37m in the year to September. The figures were well above most City expectations and provoked a round of broker upgrades.

Analysts are now hoping that both Welbilt and Magnet can make headway in markets that are still fragmented and acquisitions are expected. Welbilt, which supplies ovens and grills principally to fast-food chains, increased profits by an underlying 6 per cent.

Though growth in the US market has slowed as the major chains rein back expansion plans, this has been compensated for by growth in other markets. Some \$4m is being invested in a new technology centre which should speed product development and increase the pace of productivity and cost improvements.

At Magnet, which accounts for one-quarter of the business, profits rose by nearly 50 per cent after the disruption of the strike.

Underlying sales growth is ahead of the market average though much of this is coming from customers trading up to more expensive kitchens rather than higher sales volumes.

With only an estimated 7 per cent of the kitchens market, Mr Bowkett reckons there is scope for share gains as much of the market is still accounted for by independents.

Costs should also fall, though the plan to enter the bedroom and bathroom markets have alarmed some in the City.

With the shares jumping 11.5p to

181.5p and analysts forecasting full-year profits of £42m, the shares trade on a forward multiple of just 9.

The rating reflects past poor performance but now looks good value.

Pound deflates LIG's growth

London International, the condom and Marigold gloves maker, has managed to keep the pledge to cut executive, Nick Hodges, made to shareholders at the end of last year to achieve double-digit earnings growth.

However, it only made it by the skin of its teeth. Pre-tax profits for the six months rose 13.7 per cent to £10.8m, but earnings per share were up just 10.4 per cent.

LIG's growth has been held back by the strong pound, which depressed profits by £300,000. Heavy capital investment involved in creating the new super-thin Avanti condom and costs associated with the phasing out of its production of powdered examination gloves in the US in favour of powder-free alternatives also hindered the group's progress.

Sales were actually down a touch in sterling terms to £155.6m but costs were sharply down, allowing operating margins to rise from 7.9 per cent of sales to 8.9 per cent.

The performance of the condom and glove business remains encouraging with sales up 7 per cent to £119.1m despite the currency hit.

However the jury is still out on the success of Avanti. Initial sales are going well but it is unlikely to make a significant impact on profits in the short term.

There is also a question mark hanging over the health and beauty business which continued to decline. LIG will probably be forced to dispose of some of the worst performers in the division to get profits moving in the right direction again.

Analysts are still forecasting full-year profits of around £41m, which on yesterday's price of 156p, down 1.5p on the day, puts the group on a prospective multiple of 19.

Given concerns over health and beauty and sterling that looks expensive. High enough.

PEOPLE & BUSINESS

JOHN WILLCOCK



Industrial Landscape, for £364,500 at auction. The painting by the "matchstick men" artist has been with the company for decades, but this isn't asset stripping, says Mr Leng. The proceeds will be used to buy artworks for La porte's new head office in London.

"Rather than having art in one room, we thought we'd rather have a collection of art spread out through all our rooms," says Mr Leng. But there'll be no severed heads - it will all be stuffy stuff, he adds.

Libya is to give neighbouring Niger a loan of \$16m, which will be repayable in part by the delivery of camels, I read in Niger's government daily, *Le Sahel*. The loan will repayable over 10 years, with two-and-a-half years' grace, and the 3 per cent interest will be payable in cash, part through the export of 1,500 camels a year. Now there's an idea. Perhaps the IMF would be interested in our mad cows.

Spare a thought for John Slade, who recently resigned as head of City investment at Richard Ellis, the property agents, in order to head Hampton's new commercial property arm. Just two days after Mr Slade had sold his equity stake in Richard Ellis, the firm announced it was in talks to be acquired by giant American real estate firm Insignia, for squillions of greenbacks. Insiders reckon Mr Slade could have missed out trousering nearly £1m by just 48 hours.

All three Japanese financial institutions which have gone bust in the past month are based in the same street in Tokyo. Brian Tora of Greig Middletoe tells me that Yamachi Securities, Sanyo Securities and Hokkaido Takushoku all have head offices in a street which locals have promptly renamed *Tosan-dori* - Bankruptcy Row. Brian doesn't tell me what's happened to roots there, however.

Coopers & Lybrand, the accountancy firm, is holding a motivational workshop for business people next Monday morning titled: "Trust me - I'm passionate." If the thought of passionate accountants doesn't make you too queasy, pop along to the Grosvenor House Hotel on Monday, where Coopers' gurus will tell you how to "get people to trust each other in the workplace". The workshop on getting pigs to fly comes later.

"The name is Bond... Eurobond." Roger Moore, the urbane actor who is also Unicef special representative for the performing arts, yesterday launched the Unicef Euro Bond, the first bond in history to be denominated in euros. In fact, it's a perpetual zero coupon bond, effectively an irredeemable donation to Unicef, the United Nations children's fund. All funds will go to projects in Bolivia. The nominal price of the bond is 1 euro, plus a premium of 599 euros, worth £415.

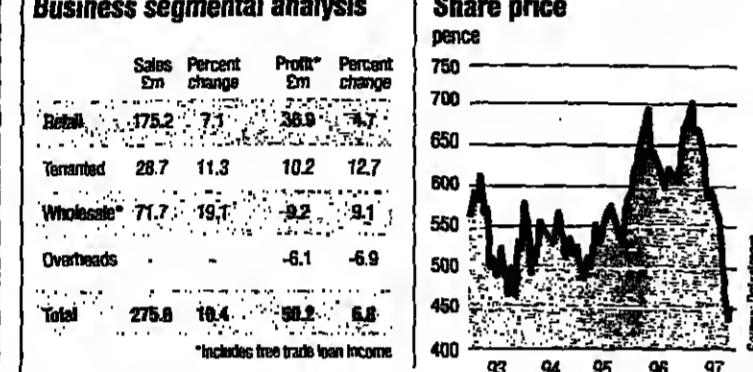
And anyone who doesn't buy one will be dropped into a tank of piranhas.

Wolverhampton & Dudley: At a glance

Market value: £308m, share price 457.5p (+6p)

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Turnover (£m)	224	231	238	250	276
Pre-tax profit (£m)	36.5	38.3	41.1	45.4	46.8
Earnings per share (p)	37.2	38.5	41.1	45.4	46.8
Dividends per share (p)	12.6	13.2	15.8	17.5	18.5

Business segmental analysis



*Includes free trade loan income

poor returns it has made from its ambitious capital expenditure programme.

It invested its money in some dodgy pub brands which have subsequently flopped.

Trade has been hit by competition from the huge number of rival theme pubs springing up all around the country.

W&D's staff costs ran well over budget, due to poor controls, adding to the misery.

Throw in the fact that there was unexpected fall in the number of pints drunk by British drinkers in the sum-

as it gets costs under control. However analysts believe W&D will have to work hard to achieve anything more than pedestrian profit growth over the next few years.

Its Banks' beer remains a popular pint, but volumes continue to fall in a declining market.

Pamela Gordon forecasts current-year profits of £45.5m, putting the shares on a prospective p/e ratio of 9.

With the stock now sitting on a steep discount to even the depressed brewing sector, shareholders should hold on and hope W&D can get it right this year.

With the shares jumping 11.5p to

Interest Rates

Country	5th chg	1 yr chg	2 yr chg	5 yr chg	10 yr chg
UK	-0.01	-0.25	-0.50	-0.75	-1.00
Australia	+0.25	+0.50	+0.75	+1.00	+1.25
Austria	+0.25	+0.50	+0.75	+1.00	+1.25
Belgium	+0.25	+0.50	+0.75	+1.00	+1.25
Denmark	+0.25	+0.50	+0.75	+1.00	+1.25
Denmark	+0.25	+0.50	+0.75	+1.00	+1.25
EU	+0.25	+0.50	+0.75	+1.00	+1.25
Finland	+0.25	+0.50	+0.75	+1.00	+1.25
France	+0.25	+0.50	+0.75	+1.00	+1.25
Germany	+0.25	+0.50	+0.75	+1.00	+1.25
Ireland	+0.25	+0.50	+0.75	+1.00	+1.25
Italy	+0.25	+0.50	+0.75	+1.00	+1.25
Japan	+0.25	+0.50	+0.75	+1.00	+1.25
Malta	+0.25	+0.50	+0.75	+1.00	+1.25
Netherlands	+0.25	+0.50	+0.75	+1.00	+1.25
New Zealand	+0.25	+0.50	+0.75	+1.00	+1.25
Norway	+0.25	+0.50	+0.75	+1.00	+1.25
Portugal	+0.25	+0.50	+0.75	+1.00	+1.25
Spain	+0.25	+0.50	+0.75	+1.00	+1.25
Sweden	+0.25	+0.50	+0.75	+1.00	+1.25
Switzerland	+0.25	+0.50	+0.75	+1.00	+1.25
UK	+0.25	+0.50	+0.75	+1.00	+1.25
USA	+0.25	+0.50	+0.75	+1.00	+1.25
Yugoslavia	+0.25	+0.50	+0.75	+1.00	+1.25

Money Market Rates

Country	Oversight Bid Offer	1 week Bid Offer	1 month Bid Offer	3 months Bid Offer	6 months Bid Offer	1 year Bid Offer
Treasury Bills	725 721 725 721 725 721 725	725 721 725 721 725 721 725	725 721 725 721 725 721 725	725 721 725 721 725 721 725	725 721 725 721 725 721 725	725 721 725 721 725 721 725
LIBOR	725 721 725 721 725 721 725	725 721 725 721 725 721 725	725 721 725 721 725 721 725	725 721 725 721 725 721 725	725 721 725 721 725 721 725	725 721 725 721 725 721 725
Domestic Deposit	725 721 725 721 725 721 725	725 721 725 721 725 721 725	725 721 725 721 725 721 725	725 721 725 721 725 721 725	725 721 725 721 725 721 725	725 721 725 721 725 721 725
Eight Bank Bills	725 721 725 721 725 721 725	725 721 725 721 725 721 725	725 721 725 721 725 721 725	725 721 725 721 725 721 725	725 721 725 721 725 7	

27/SHARES

Standard Chartered lunch for analysts leaves a bitter aftertaste

MARKET REPORT



CATHY NEWMAN

The way to a man's heart may be through his stomach, but not necessarily if the man in question is a stockbroker, as Standard Chartered discovered to its peril yesterday.

The bank invited several leading analysts to lunch yesterday, only to see its shares viciously marked down in afternoon trading. As it turned out, Standard's hospitality was not at fault. What had worried analysts was the company's post-prandial comments that it hoped the market would be prepared to provide capital for an acquisition. Fears of a rights issue sent the shares down 22p to 675p.

The cash-tills were ringing for other banks, though, with Royal Bank of Scotland 12p richer at 685p. The group reported pre-tax profit of £768m for the year, up 19 per cent. A wave of upgrades are expect-

ed to follow the better-than-expected figures. Nat West is one of many brokers to make positive noises yesterday.

Lloyds TSB was another one in the money, adding 13p to 684p after a buy recommendation from Panmure Gordon. The broker believes Lloyds will make a large acquisition within the next six months. Standard Chartered has been mentioned as a possible target, though Panmure believes Lloyds is more likely to have an insurance company in its sights.

Barclays, up 6p to £14.47, is also looking at the insurance sector, which might explain why, once again, market-makers liked Commercial Union. It was the second-biggest Footsie climber, soaring 34p to 852p, although volume was light.

Yet again, Footsie had an uneventful day. Although it managed to break through

the other blue chips, though, as dealers responded enthusiastically to the results of a strategic review by Derek Green, the new chief executive. United, up 52p to 777p, was buoyed by news of additional cost-cutting and a more cautious outlook on overseas expansion. The company shunned off-sell advice from ABN Amro Hoare Govett.

Vodafone Group was another star performer in the first division, dialling up a 13p rise to 349p. US investors are believed to be buying large chunks of shares following a week-long tour of New York and Boston institutions by Vodafone's management.

There were also the perennial whispers that AT&T might launch a bid.

United Utilities put out

which agreed a £1.8bn bid for the building materials group on Tuesday night.

A pair of new issues graced

the market. Tetra, the computer group, was placed at 160p and closed 11.5p up;

Seascape Shipping, a shipbroking firm, started trading at 25p and finished up 5p.

Positive results and a buy note from ABN Amro Hoare Govett among others helped Johnson Matthey add 30.5p to 553p. Another broker suggested the precious metals group, which reported a 14 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £58.2m, was good value up to 650p. However, Nat West said it was "cautious" on the company.

Zeneca continued to gain following Wednesday's approval of the Zomig migraine drug. The drugs behemoth closed up 69p at 18.96.

Meanwhile, despite flat pre-exceptional profits, Wolverhampton edged up 6p to 457.5p. The pub group's share price has had a disas-

TAKING STOCK

Crown Products Group, the AIM-listed gifts, arts and crafts manufacturer, is expected to unveil its refinancing plans within a fortnight. The company, which said at

its AGM in August that there

was a clear need for new funds, lost another penny

yesterday and closed a

whisker above zero at 1.25p.

Crown, which has appointed

a new chairman since the

AGM, has been talking to in-

stitutional investors in the

past few weeks about its

plans.

Northstar Securities, the property group, is believed to be on the point of agreeing a merger. Julian Fifield, chief executive, resigned yesterday, and City sources said it was

likely the company had re-

ceived a bid approach. North-

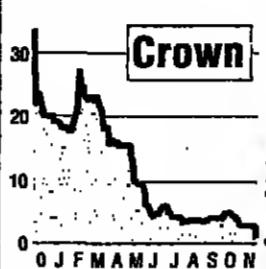
star came to the market in

the spring at 30p. It closed

unchanged at 47p last night.

Share Spotlight

share price, pence



Source: Bloomberg

0 J F M A M J J A S O N

ford
uni
cral
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CRICKET

England want county veto for Graveney

David Graveney is set to be handed more power over England team affairs than any previous chairman of selectors.

Mark Baldwin reports.

England players may be withdrawn from county matches next season if David Graveney, the chairman of selectors, thinks it is in the national team's interests.

"In Australia you don't see their top players playing Shield cricket. Glenn McGrath, their best fast bowler, has only played once for New South Wales in the last three years."

Botham believes that getting beaten 3-0 by Zimbabwe in a one-day series last winter "was the best thing that could have happened to English cricket".

In a foreword to the new *Benson and Hedges Cricket Year*, Botham criticises England's players for their attitude in Zimbabwe. However, he is optimistic that Mike Atherton's team will do well in the West Indies this winter.

"If ever the West Indies were there for the taking on their home soil then it is now, and I think we will win or come close to it this winter," Botham said.

"Also think it will be to England's advantage if Brian Lara is made captain of the West Indies because that will increase the pressure on him."

TENNIS: DAVIS CUP FINAL

Larsson ready to challenge the supremacy of Sampras

Sweden have chosen Magnus Larsson as their second singles player for the Davis Cup final against the United States which starts today. Larsson is the only man to beat Sampras twice this year, and was preferred to Thomas Enqvist.

Larsson will play Sampras in today's second singles after the world No 4 Jonas Björkman has

played Michael Chang, who is ranked one place ahead of him.

Larsson clearly believes he can win against both Chang and Sampras. "The most important thing is that I know what it feels like to beat him," Larsson said of Sampras. "He knows he can lose to me unless he plays very well. I have a chance and I have come here to take it."

With the club said yesterday: "Come on, it was just a joke. The whole affair seems to have originated from an aside made by the Hajduk coach, Luka Bonacic, over the transfer of Tomislav Erceg to the Italian Serie B side Ancona. Bonacic said he was so desperate that he had decided to pick Ivanisevic.



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Raviinda Pushpakumara, of Sri Lanka, traps India's Mohammad Azharuddin lbw on the second day of the second Test match in Nagpur yesterday. Photograph: AFP

Dravid leads India's charge

Sachin Tendulkar was the only front-line batsmen not to take advantage of a slow wicket as India piled on the runs to reach 401 for 5 after the second day of the second Test against Sri Lanka at Nagpur yesterday.

The Indian captain was bowled round his legs by Ravindra Pushpakumara for 15, while his side extended their total from 133 for 1 after the rain-hit first day. Rahul Dravid led India's charge against a limited Sri Lankan attack with a polished

92. Navjot Sidhu (79), Mohammad Azharuddin (62) and Saurav Ganguly (67 not out) also scored freely.

● Heavy rain stopped the Australian openers, Mark Taylor and Matthew Elliott, pushing on from their solid start against New Zealand in the third Test in Hobart yesterday. After an early lunch, the second and third sessions were washed out with Australia left on 39 for 0.

Scoreboards, Sporting Digest, page 31

COMPLETE FIXTURES FOR THE 1998 CRICKET SEASON

Derbyshire

APRIL

17 (S) Nottinghamshire, Derby (0)
21 Nottinghamshire, Derby (1 AX)
23 Yorkshire, Headingley (1 AX)
25 Durham, Derby (1 AX)

MAY

1 Worcestershire, Worcester (1 BH)

4 (S) Lancashire, Old Trafford (1 BH)

6 Scotland, Forfar (1 BH)

16 Lancashire, Old Trafford (1 AX)

18 Warwickshire, Warwick (1 AX)

20 Leicestershire, Derby (1 AX)

22 (S) Sussex, Hove (0)

24 (S) Leicestershire, Leicester (1 BH)

JUNE

3 Gloucestershire, Cheltenham (0)

7 (S) Warwickshire, Cheltenham (1 AX)

9 Cambridge University, Fenner's (0) Subject to further Delays our University by 1 day

14 (S) Warwickshire, Cheltenham (1 AX)

16 (S) Warwickshire, Cheltenham (1 AX)

18 (S) South Africa, Durban (0)

22 Northamptonshire, Northampton (0)

24 (S) Warwickshire, Northampton (1 AX)

30 Kent, Derby (0)

AUGUST

2 Derby, Derby (1 AX)

5 (S) Surrey, The Oval (1 AX)

7 (S) Lancashire, Old Trafford (1 AX)

12 (S) Warwickshire, Southampton (1 AX)

14 (S) Warwickshire, Southampton (1 AX)

16 (S) Warwickshire, Southampton (1 AX)

18 (S) Warwickshire, Southampton (1 AX)

20 (S) Warwickshire, Southampton (1 AX)

22 (S) Warwickshire, Southampton (1 AX)

24 (S) Warwickshire, Southampton (1 AX)

26 (S) Warwickshire, Southampton (1 AX)

28 (S) Warwickshire, Southampton (1 AX)

30 (S) Warwickshire, Southampton (1 AX)

Durham

APRIL

17 Warwickshire, Edgbaston (0)

18 Warwickshire, Edgbaston (1 AX)

20 (S) Warwickshire, Edgbaston (1 AX)

22 Gloucester, Cheltenham (1 AX)

24 Derbyshire, Derby (1 BH)

MAY

2 Worcestershire, Worcester (1 AX)

4 (S) Lancashire, Cheltenham (1 BH)

6 (S) Lancashire, Cheltenham (1 AX)

8 (S) Lancashire, Cheltenham (1 AX)

10 (S) Lancashire, Cheltenham (1 AX)

12 (S) Lancashire, Cheltenham (1 AX)

14 (S) Lancashire, Cheltenham (1 AX)

16 (S) Lancashire, Cheltenham (1 AX)

18 (S) Lancashire, Cheltenham (1 AX)

20 (S) Lancashire, Cheltenham (1 AX)

22 (S) Lancashire, Cheltenham (1 AX)

24 (S) Lancashire, Cheltenham (1 AX)

26 (S) Lancashire, Cheltenham (1 AX)

28 (S) Lancashire, Cheltenham (1 AX)

JUNE

3 (S) Middlesex, TBC (0)

5 (S) Middlesex, TBC (1 AX)

7 (S) Middlesex, Cardiff (1 AX)

9 (S) Middlesex, Cardiff (1 AX)

11 (S) Middlesex, Cardiff (1 AX)

13 (S) Middlesex, Cardiff (1 AX)

15 (S) Middlesex, Cardiff (1 AX)

17 (S) Middlesex, Cardiff (1 AX)

19 (S) Middlesex, Cardiff (1 AX)

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23 (S) Middlesex, Cardiff (1 AX)

25 (S) Middlesex, Cardiff (1 AX)

27 (S) Middlesex, Cardiff (1 AX)

29 (S) Middlesex, Cardiff (1 AX)

31 (S) Middlesex, Cardiff (1 AX)

Middlesex

APRIL

17 (S) Gloucestershire, Bristol (0)

19 (S) Gloucestershire, Bristol (1 AX)

21 (S) Gloucestershire, Bristol (1 AX)

23 (S) Gloucestershire, Bristol (1 AX)

25 (S) Gloucestershire, Bristol (1 AX)

27 (S) Gloucestershire, Bristol (1 AX)

MAY

1 (S) Essex, Colchester (0)

3 (S) Essex, Colchester (1 AX)

5 (S) Essex, Colchester (1 AX)

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JUNE

1 (S) Essex, Colchester (0)

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Middlesex

APRIL

17 (S) Warwickshire, Birmingham (0)

19 (S) Warwickshire, Birmingham (1 AX)

21 (S) Warwickshire, Birmingham (1 AX)

23 (S) Warwickshire, Birmingham (1 AX)

25 (S

29/SPORT

Coombe fortifies Cup field

The field for tomorrow's big race takes shape at last and backers of leading contenders for the Hennessy now seem sure to get a run for their money. Greg Wood reports

Suny Bay has been at the top of the betting since his 11-length victory in the Edward Hammer Chase at Haydock nine days ago, but it seemed that backers might not even get a run for their money when Brooks made some stinging criticisms of Newbury's attitude to jumps racing earlier in the week.

Yesterday, though, he poked a stick into the take-offs and landings and was pleased with the results. "I have had a look and I am happy," he said. "It is good ground and they have had a lot of rain. I have aired some things which needed airing and I think Newbury will now address them."

As for Suny Bay, last year's Grand National runner-up is "fine". He has got quite a lot of weight [11st 8lb] but he has got a decent chance on Saturday."

The chance that Coome Hill would line up tomorrow seemed much more remote only as recently as Wednesday. His seasonal reappearance, when third to Banjo on Murphy's Gold Cup day, was a minor disaster, with the chaser both pulling a muscle and knocking a vertebra, but all

now seems to be well, with two recent workouts offering no evidence of any lingering problems.

"Coome Hill worked again this morning and we're reasonably optimistic," Walter Dennis, his trainer, said yesterday. "All other things being equal, he is going to run. He wouldn't be going to Newbury unless I was happy with him and he has now done a couple of good pieces of work. I am never confident and he has got a fair old weight but he's well otherwise."

Dennis has booked Mick Fitzgerald to ride Coome Hill, in the enforced absence of Jamie Osborne, his regular partner. Fitzgerald will sit on the gelding for the first time in the paddock tomorrow afternoon, but Dennis is unperturbed by his shortage of experience. "That doesn't worry me as he is a very straightforward ride," he said. "Every jockey who has won on him had never schooled him before."

Cool Dawn, who seemed to improve significantly when his owner, amateur rider Di Harding, pulled a muscle and knocking a vertebra, but all

jockey last weekend, is only "50-50" to make the race.

"I'll have to talk to the owner, and also the racecourse to find out what the going is likely to be," Robert Alner, the former hunter-chaser's trainer, said yesterday. "They're telling me now that they had 6mm of rain last night and that it's on the soft side of good, and as far as Cool Dawn's concerned, the better the going, the better his chance."

It is fortunate, then, that Cool Dawn is not based in a stable in Ireland. Space Truck, runner-up in last year's Champion Hurdle and the horse who sent Osborne to the sidelines when falling in a novice chase at Cheltenham two weeks ago, will return to Britain this weekend because Ireland is currently "swimming", according his trainer, Jessica Harrington.

"He needs good ground, and will go to either Haydock or Warwick," Mrs Harrington said yesterday. "I was talking to Jamie this morning and he said the horse had jumped super until he fell. It was just one of those things."



Photograph: Sporting Life

Charlie Swan: Hopeful of an Irish victory in the Hennessy

Swan contented with Time on his side

Time For A Run is trying to be the first Irish-trained horse to win the Hennessy since Bright Honey 17 years ago.

Charlie Swan, who rides Time For A Run, a 7-1 shot for Saturday, said yesterday: "He's an old favourite of mine and he'll go really well."

Swan rode him to victory in the 1994 Coral Cup hurdle at the Cheltenham Festival. Time For A Run has also made his mark over fences, notably when he took second in King Lucifer in the Kim Muir Chase at Cheltenham in March, but has yet to win beyond three miles.

The Irish champion rider has twice been third in the Hennessy, on Lo Stregone last year and on Caherhillabow in 1990. Swan is among those who believe few Irish chasers have won handicaps in England in recent years because they are unfairly weighted.

Meanwhile, Keighley, one of

the best-supported clubs in the lower divisions, and Workington, who were in Super League during its inaugural season in 1996, could both be expelled from the league after being in administration for more than a year. Along with perennial strugglers, Prescot, they could face being thrown out unless they can come up with convincing business plans before next Wednesday, when the Rugby League Council meets.

A midsummer break from domestic competition for next season will also be considered, with a triangular tournament in Australia, also involving Great Britain and New Zealand, being one possible option to fill the gap.

At the same time, a home international series would be played in Britain, but the World Cup, scheduled for Australia next October, would be postponed.

— Dave Hadfield

HOCKEY

Whitley Bay stand defiant

Whitley Bay are not exactly looking forward to their three and a half hour trip to Crosby tomorrow for their North Second Division game, but it is nothing compared with the journey Clifton, last year's Cup finalists, will have to make to Northumberland to play them in the women's EHA Cup fourth-round tie on Sunday.

The junior northumbrian club, playing at this stage of the competition for the first time, are not overawed. Fiona Atkinson, the Whitley Bay captain who scored the winning goal at East Grinstead in the last round, said: "We just hope we will do ourselves justice. We are an experienced team and a good mix. We are none the wiser about Clifton's big names, so we will not be intimidated."

— Bill Colwill

TODAY'S FIXTURES

Football

7.45 unites stated
NATIONWIDE FOOTBALL LEAGUE First Division
BIRMINGHAM CITY v LUTON TOWN
URLSPORT UNITED COUNTIES LEAGUE Premier Division: SELBY CORBY v COPIGORE (230), HARF LAGER NATIONAL LEAGUE OF IRISH STADIUMS: DUBLIN STADIUM v ST PATRICK'S ATHLETIC v DROGHEDA: SHAMROCKS v DERRY CITY.

Rugby Union

7.30 unites stated
TOUR MATCH: Bath v ACT (750).

CHELTENHAM AND GLOUCESTER CUP Group A: CHELTENHAM v NORWICH GROUP B: LONDON WANDERS v LIVERPOOL GROUP C: COVENTRY v MANCHESTER CITY GROUP D: NEWCASTLE UNITED v SHEFFIELD UNITED GROUP E: LEEDS UNITED v BIRMINGHAM CITY GROUP F: NOTTINGHAM FOREST v LIVERPOOL GROUP G: ASTON VILLA v STOKE GROUP H: BIRMINGHAM CITY v NEWCASTLE UNITED GROUP I: SHEFFIELD UNITED v LIVERPOOL GROUP J: LIVERPOOL v ASTON VILLA GROUP K: NEWCASTLE UNITED v SHEFFIELD UNITED GROUP L: LEEDS UNITED v NEWCASTLE UNITED GROUP M: LIVERPOOL v SHEFFIELD UNITED GROUP N: ASTON VILLA v NEWCASTLE UNITED GROUP O: LIVERPOOL v SHEFFIELD UNITED GROUP P: NEWCASTLE UNITED v LEEDS UNITED GROUP Q: SHEFFIELD UNITED v NEWCASTLE UNITED GROUP R: NEWCASTLE UNITED v LEEDS UNITED GROUP S: LIVERPOOL v NEWCASTLE UNITED GROUP T: SHEFFIELD UNITED v NEWCASTLE UNITED GROUP U: NEWCASTLE UNITED v LEEDS UNITED GROUP V: NEWCASTLE UNITED v SHEFFIELD UNITED GROUP W: NEWCASTLE UNITED v LEEDS UNITED GROUP X: NEWCASTLE UNITED v SHEFFIELD UNITED GROUP Y: NEWCASTLE UNITED v LEEDS UNITED GROUP Z: NEWCASTLE UNITED v SHEFFIELD UNITED

CLUB MATCH: Oxford University v UWC (Cardiff Institute) (750); Lydney v Clinton.

Other sports
BOXING: WBO lightweight title (vacant) contest: Steve Williams (19) v Tony Smith (20) (Not Yet Settled Green, London).
SNOKER: UK Championship (Preston).
SWIMMING: English Women's Team Championship (Birmingham).

TODAY'S NUMBER
9,639

The number of runs scored in Sheffield Shield cricket this season — a competition record — by South Australia's captain, Jamie Siddons, who broke David Hookes' old record of 9,634 runs when he hit 60 against Victoria in Melbourne yesterday.

TAUNTON

RESULTS

1.25: 1. GUTTERIDGE (T Murphy) 2-1
2. Non-Racer: Northern Drums 3-2; Walton Arrows 3-2; Weymouth, Wareham, Westport 3-1.
Totes: C240; C320; C340; C350.
Forecasts: C200; Computer Smart Forecast: C198; Tricast: C200; Trix: C230; Non Runner: Perfect Punt.

1.25: 1. CIRCLE OF MAGIC (A P McCoy) 2-4
2. Non-Racer: Digital Optimum 2-4;
Payaso 20-1; 12. 31st; 1. M Potts Wellington); Total: C130; C140; C150; C160; DF: C180; C190; CSF: C200; Trix: C220; Totes: C230; Computer Smart Forecast: C230; Tricast: C230; Non Runner: Perfect Punt.

1.25: 1. CIRCLE OF MAGIC (A P McCoy) 2-4
2. Non-Racer: Digital Optimum 2-4;
Payaso 20-1; 12. 31st; 1. M Potts Wellington); Total: C130; C140; C150; C160; DF: C180; C190; CSF: C200; Trix: C220; Totes: C230; Computer Smart Forecast: C230; Tricast: C230; Non Runner: Perfect Punt.

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2. Non-Racer: Digital Optimum 2-4;
Payaso 20-1; 12. 31st; 1. M Potts Wellington); Total: C130; C140; C150; C160; DF: C180; C190; CSF: C200; Trix: C220; Totes: C230; Computer Smart Forecast: C230; Tricast: C230; Non Runner: Perfect Punt.

1.25: 1. CIRCLE OF MAGIC (A P McCoy) 2-4
2. Non-Racer: Digital Optimum 2-4;
Payaso 20-1; 12. 31st; 1. M Potts Wellington); Total: C130; C140; C150; C160; DF: C180; C190; CSF: C200; Trix: C220; Totes: C230; Computer Smart Forecast: C230; Tricast: C230; Non Runner: Perfect Punt.

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Swanepoel the rookie scuba-diving 'nugget with attitude'

Six months ago, the very thought of life without Joost van der Westhuizen was enough to send Springbok supporters in search of psychiatric counselling. Suddenly, Werner Swanepoel materialised to calm the nerves of a nation.

Werner who? Chris Hewett sheds some light on the unknown Bokkie scrum-half, who replaces the irreplaceable at Twickenham tomorrow.

This will sound heretical enough to uneducated English ears, so it is easy to imagine the kerfuffle it is likely to cause down Pretoria way. Still, in for

a penny, in for a krugerrand. Joost van der Westhuizen does it - repeat, not - possess the longest, fastest, most accurate scrum-half's pass in South African rugby. You want proof? Ask the Springboks themselves, any of them. Well, with one obvious exception.

Actually, make that two exceptions. Van der Westhuizen, the brooding but undeniably brilliant Blue Bull of Bolke legend, is not the sort to give best to anyone, least of all an understudy with little or no reputation outside the boundaries of the green and gold republic. But then, you are equally unlikely to catch Werner Swanepoel spouting forth on the subject. He talks about everything else, does Swanepoel, but he gives this particular issue a wide berth.

"We all know about Joost's ability, which is phenomenal," says the 24-year-old scuba-

diving Free Stater. "At the start of the season, my aim was simply to secure my place on the Springbok bench. For me, that was enough to worry about."

Now that I am in the side, people say to me: 'Ah, you must play like Joost, get your game up to Joost's level.' It's no use my sitting back and saying: 'I can't do that.' I will try to take the opportunity that I now have, but to follow Joost is to ask a great deal of myself."

The real story comes from the coaches, players, journalists and rank and file supporters attached to this formidable and, in the light of last summer's humbling defeat by the Lions and the subsequent management upheavals, remarkably happy Springbok camp.

"He doesn't possess the absolute killer break that Van der Westhuizen offers, but he's not far short of Joost when he

goes for a gap and, yes, he has the better service," says Louis de Villiers, an acute observer of the South African scene.

By common consent, Swanepoel eased a splitting selection headache for the South African top table by performing with striking maturity in last week's 52-10 victory over the French in Paris.

Much to the chagrin of the Bolke hordes, particularly those from Northern Transvaal, Van der Westhuizen has been invalided out of the tour a week previously, so Swanepoel, capped as a replacement but never as first choice, was given his head. He began by fielding a loose French kick and sending Percy Montgomery away for a try inside 50 seconds and with his forwards shelling out quality possession against a dispirited band of self-destructing Tricolores, he revelled in the occasion.

"The difficult stuff was over by half-time because the pack had taken charge and were giving me the ball on a plate," says Swanepoel. "At the start, the atmosphere at the Parc des Princes was quite something and it really meant something to me to be out there for the anthems, but the crowd went still after a while. All I needed to do was stay focused on my tasks. My teammates made it easy for me."

Modestly, Swanepoel paints a self-portrait of a rookie who knows his place in the great Springbok scheme of things. "The coaches tell me to play it as I see it, but when you're positioned between your captain, Gary Teichmann, at No 8 and a great stand-off like Henry Honiball, you tend to let others call the shots," he insists.

But according to another fast-arriving Springbok high-flier, the Western Province

flanker Bobby Skinstad, young Werner is no shrinking violet.

"He's a forward's nightmare," he says. "He just doesn't shut up. He's a nugget with attitude." An Afrikaans version of Austin Healey, then? The mind boggles.

Swanepoel was born in Bloemfontein and educated at Grey College, the great sporting nursery that boasts Morne du Plessis and Kepler Wessels among its more distinguished old boys. He won caps at under-21 and under-23 before touring Britain and Ireland with a powerful South Africa A squad last year.

Come the late spring, he was on the Bolke bench and it was from there that he observed the miseries of the Lions series. Indeed, he won his first cap in the final Test, replacing van der Westhuizen as the clock ticked down on a "dead" match at Ellis Park.

A generally unsuccessful Tri-Nations cost Carel du Plessis his job as coach but his successor, Nick Mallett, was quick to make his own investment in Swanepoel's future. "I've known Nick for a month and I've been deeply impressed by him as a rugby thinker," says the scrum-half. "We're getting along just fine."

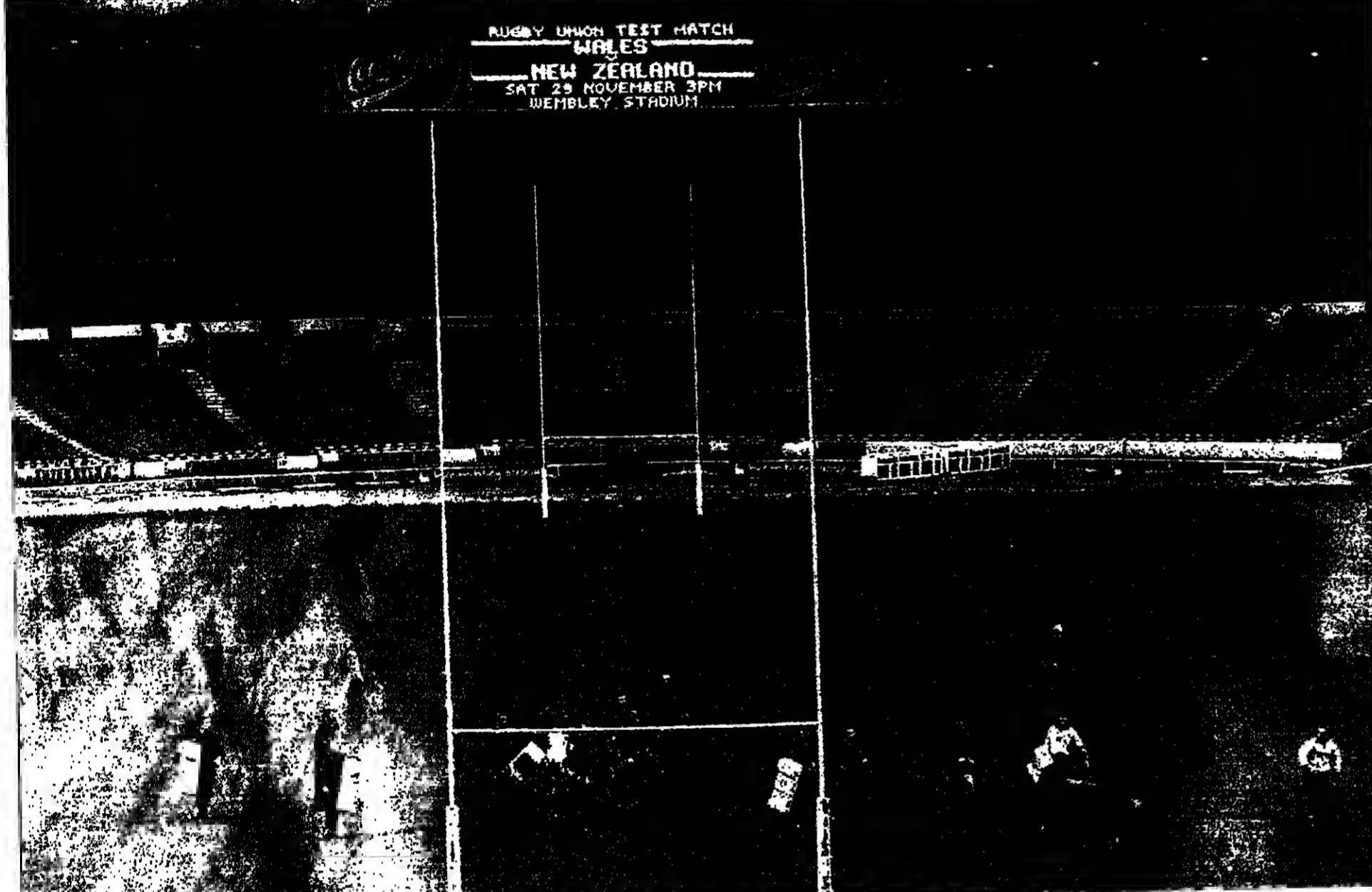
"What we are doing on this trip is reassessing our own standards; South African rugby has a culture of winning and we need to rediscover that culture after the disappointments of the Lions tour and the Tri-Nations."

Quite simply, it is important to win every Test we play, both to ourselves as players and to the nation as a whole.

"I believe we are now playing with greater flexibility. You talk of Plan A and Plan B but we go up to Plan Z now; there is a different game plan for every



Swanepoel: 'To follow Joost is to ask a great deal'



Working out at Wembley: The Welsh team get acquainted with unfamiliar surroundings yesterday as they prepared to take on the All Blacks

Photograph: Robert Hallam

Howley determined to be the best

Robert Howley tackles New Zealand for the first time in his career tomorrow, intent on reinforcing his standing as a world-class scrum-half.

The denial Welshman, cruelly denied a Lions Test berth against South Africa last summer by injury, knows he must produce a trademark performance if a 43-year losing streak against the All Blacks is to be ended.

Pressure on his broad shoulders is enormous, yet the Cardiff

player believes he has already done the hard part - being selected above his great friend and rival, Pontypridd's Paul John.

Kevin Bowning, the Welsh coach, gave John the No 9 jersey against Tonga last week, but when Howley went on in the second half, he single-handedly transformed the side.

"I knew that I would need to

hit a certain standard if I wanted any chance of playing against New Zealand," Howley said.

"Paul and myself have been challenging for the scrum-half spot over several years, and that rivalry will continue. The more competition there is for your place, then the better player it makes you."

Howley rebuffs any suggestion that Wales will resort to a tight set-piece game, the pop-

comeback, but playing 20 minutes against Tonga will be nothing like opposing New Zealand.

I will be putting myself against the world's best scrum-half [Justin Marshall], while the team must compete with the All Blacks, producing awesome rugby."

Howley rebuffs any suggestion that Wales will resort to a tight set-piece game, the pop-

ular theory which many believe has credence, given how effectively the English Rugby Partnership XV took on New Zealand in midweek.

"It has been said that if you risk playing the high-tempo game against New Zealand, you will be blown apart," Howley said. "Wales are developing a game the players are comfortable with

- one played at considerable pace, so this is the acid test."

Wales will be in exile for the next 18 months, while work continues on the £120m Millennium Stadium, but Wembley has proved popular with their fans - tomorrow's attendance will be 78,000.

• Paul Hogan, the 26-year-old London Irish scrum-half, will deputise for the injured Brian O'Meara on Ireland's replacements' bench for Sunday's Test against Canada in Dublin.

The point for an oarsman,

of the rowing ergometer - or indoor rowing machine - is that it is pure effort. In a boat race there are always outside factors, such as the wind, that reduce the degree to which you can drive yourself and the test ceases to be one of raw power and becomes watermanship.

Of course strength and fitness count here too, but at the end you are unlikely to be utterly cleaned out. The difficult water prevents the athlete from following each stroke of purely applied power with another. The boat rocks, or the steering shifts, and a correcting stroke is required and the power comes off a fraction.

The machine offers no such relief.

It is unavoidably exhausting, which means, of course, that the competitor must find a level of performance, of output, that can be sustained for the whole of the 2,000

metres of the race distance. In effect,

you want your last stroke to be, genuinely, your last. If you are properly exhausted you stop. So, something you can keep up for six minutes plus has to be found which will bring you within sight of the finish before the physical system begins to collapse.

The designers of the ergometer have thoughtfully provided a computerised monitor which reads the power applied to the oar handle and prints it out in various forms, of which the most useful is the time it will take to cover 500m at this speed, called the "500 split".

Most who use the ergometer measure themselves against the 500 split throughout the day's programme. It is easy to calculate the end result. A target for 2,000m of 6min 25sec (which is mine) might be achieved by averaging 1min 36.25sec per 500m through the piece. It can get more sophisticated: you could go a little quicker for the first quarter at, say, 1min 35sec,

then steady through the middle, 1,000m at 1min 37.5 sec, then blast for home, only when the line is in sight, and another 1min 35sec will do.

Now if you are Greg Searle,

James Cracknell or

me breathing above couch potato rate and prevented all training for a week. When it was possible to work again there were fewer than three weeks to go. So I did five days of 60-minute sessions, at 18 strokes to the minute, and was able, daily, to lower the 500 split until I ended up at 1:50.2 for the entire one-hour piece. Each day, as improved, I thought: "That's another couple of seconds knocked off the final time."

So I rang Sean Bowden, to the British Olympic eight, and asked him for a programme to take me through the last 10 days to the race. I should never have boasted about the uprising strength which seemed to flow from the long training sessions. He devised a set of shorter, intense pieces, mostly segments of the race - 500m and 1000m rows, repeated several times.

It was when I came to the two-times 1500m session that it all came unstuck. Then I hoped the target would be 1:35 per 500m. But when I tried it, I got half-way through and was unable to carry on and experienced the worst kind of psychological damage humping into your physical limit can bring down on you.

Despair. A race in five days and you don't even know what a sustainable rate might be, and, whatever it is, it will be much slower than seemed possible a week ago.

Already the taste of Sunday

has gone from nectar to ash.

GOLF

Lonard leads from Colart

The Australian Masters champion, Peter Lonard, fired a course record nine-under-par 63 to take a two-stroke lead in the opening round of the Australian Open in Melbourne yesterday.

Lonard leads Scotland's Australian PGA winner, Andrew Colart, on 65. Lonard, who won the Masters and topped Australia's Order of Merit last season, left playing partner Greg Norman behind with nine birdies.

Britain's Lee Westwood opened with a 68, the same score as Norman, who will equal Jack Nicklaus' six Australian Open titles if he wins this weekend - Gary Player has the record with seven.

SNOOKER

Money rolls in for Stevens

Matthew Stevens guaranteed himself a career-best pay-day when he cruised into the semi-finals of the Liverpool Victoria UK Championship in Preston yesterday.

The 20-year-old from Carmarthen beat the Scotsman David Dziewialtowski 9-1 to earn £19,750. That will turn into £75,000 if he can become the first Welshman for nine years to lift the trophy.

Stevens the world No 53 who beat the world No 4, Mark Williams, 9-4, needed only 30 minutes to complete his victory.

"The first couple of frames gave me a great deal of confidence and I just went on from there," Stevens said. "I expected a tougher match because

ICE HOCKEY

Lynch to use video evidence

Jim Lynch, the Ayr Scottish Eagles coach, will send a video of his side's 7-4 Express Cup win over Sheffield Steelers on Wednesday to the Superleague after two of his players were injured in incidents not spotted by the referee or his linesman. Ayr's leading scorer Dennis

Purdie is in hospital with a serious dead leg after being kneed in the thigh by Corey Beaulieu and could be out for six weeks.

His fellow forward Sam Groleau needed six stitches and suffered mild concussion after being cross-checked from behind by Ron Shadrake.

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SAILING

Dalton looks to atone for 19-day 'nightmare'

Grant Dalton, the skipper of Merit Cup, is promising to bounce back after posting a miserable seventh in the second leg of the Whitbread Round the World Race.

Stuart Alexander reports from Fremantle.

Second on the first leg from Southampton, everything went wrong just four hours after leaving Cape Town and Grant Dalton could only sit at the back of the fleet and seethe as the leg winner, Gunnar Krantz, brought Swedish Match into Fremantle

just one hour under four days ahead of him.

Dalton and his crew were in danger of running out of food as the voyage stretched to 19 days - the last 36 hours spent ensnared in a high pressure system.

The crew, who had endured

a "nightmare", would be given a few days leave "to get their heads back together" and then it would be back to hard work. "We need to win one of the next two legs," Dalton said. "This is just the second race in a nine-race regatta."

Just to make sure there are no more mistakes, Dalton will be boasting his onboard meteorological expertise for the third leg to Sydney, even though he already has one of the world's fore-

most weathermen in Bob Rice.

Lawrie Smith is doing the same on Silk Cut by bringing in the New Zealander Nick White, the navigator on Yamato when she won the last Whitbread race.

Still to arrive is the all-woman crew of EF Education. "I was going to stab myself through the heart with dividers if the girls had got past us," Dalton said.

WHITEBREAD ROUND THE WORLD RACE (second leg): 1. Swedish Match (Swe) G Krantz 15 days 03h 45min 03sec; 2. Innovation (Ned) K Frost 16 days 01h 27min 03sec; 3. Silk Cut (GB) L Smith 16 days 00h 05min 06sec; 4. EF Education (Swe) P Ceder 16 days 00h 27min 22sec; 5. Silk Cut (GB) L Smith 16 days 00h 27min 22sec; 6. Classic Racing (USA) P Higgins 16 days 00h 27min 22sec; 7. Silk Cut (GB) L Smith 16 days 00h 27min 22sec; 8. EF Education (Swe) G Krantz 16 days 00h 27min 22sec; 9. Silk Cut (GB) L Smith 16 days 00h 27min 22sec; 10. Silk Cut (GB) L Smith 16 days 00h 27min 22sec.

ON WEDNESDAY IT WAS THEM.

Draw date: 26/11/97. The winning numbers: 5, 11, 19, 23, 24, 47. Bonus number: 17.

Total Sales: £30,980,069. Prize Fund: £13,941,031 (45% of ticket sales).

Category No. of winners Amount for each winner Total each tier

Match 6 (Jackpot) 11 £3,903,066

Atkinson in £4m move for Everton's Speed

Everton's unsettled captain, Gary Speed, is a £4m target for Ron Atkinson's Sheffield Wednesday. The Welsh international midfielder has been one of Everton's most consistent performers this season, but has grown disillusioned with the club's poor form.

Kendall rejected advances for Speed from Middlesbrough and Newcastle earlier in the season, but Wednesday have big money to spend. Atkinson, their new manager, reportedly has about £10m at his disposal.

Atkinson has paved the way for the Speed move by setting up a swap deal to send Mark Pemberton to Coventry in exchange for the veteran defender, David Burrows.

Atkinson took Burrows to Coventry in the first place and rates him highly. He is willing to sacrifice Pemberton in a straight exchange, with no money changing hands.

Everton's chairman, Peter Johnson, has hit out at his critics in the wake of Wednesday's 2-0 defeat at Chelsea, which left the Toffees at the bottom of the Premiership.

"Evertonians need to get behind the team and they also have to remember I don't want to lose every game," Johnson said after pointing out that £25m has been put into the club by the current shareholders. "We are all in this together. I don't want to travel down to London and watch my team lose, for God's sake."

Yesterday Johnson approved Everton's purchase of the Norwegian Under-21 goalkeeper, Thomas Myhra, for £800,000 from Viking Stavanger.

Southampton hope to complete the £200,000 signing of the Norwegian midfield player, Bjorn Johansen, from Brøndby the weekend. The 24-year-old impressed during a three-day trial last week.

Liverpool's hopes of giving a debut to Brad Friedel at Arsenal on Sunday are vanishing. The Anfield club are ready to pay the United States Soccer

Federation £2m for the US international goalkeeper, but so far have been unable to secure a work permit from the Department of Employment and Education.

Fulham have splashed out on two more players from Premiership clubs as Kevin Keegan and Ray Wilkins continue to transform the Second Division club. The midfielder Paul Trollope has completed a £600,000 move from Derby, while they have also spent £100,000 on Bolton's Scottish defender, Steve McAnespie.

Fulham have now spent almost £5m since the Harrods owner, Mohamed Al Fayed, took over the west London side in the summer.

Sheffield United are hoping to sign Tottenham's Scotland centre-back, Colin Calderwood, on loan as a replacement for Carl Tiler, who has been sold to Everton. Calderwood is also wanted by Aberdeen, while Spurs have denied reports linking them with Lazio's unsettled Italian international striker, Giuseppe Signori.

Bryan Hamilton, the former Northern Ireland manager, has joined Ipswich Town - where he spent the best years of his playing career - as first-team coach.

Scotland's top 10 clubs failed to gain permission yesterday leave the Scottish Football League at the end of the season - but they still intend to press ahead with plans for a breakaway league next term.

The Scottish League president, Doug Smith, used his casting vote at a management committee meeting to block the top clubs' proposal to resign.

Johan Cruyff, the former Barcelona coach, was in a stable condition in an Amsterdam hospital yesterday after being admitted with a heart complaint. He had double bypass heart surgery in 1991.

- Alan Nixon
and Rupert Metcalf

Toon Army trauma,
Melbourne mania, page 31



Greg Norman fires out of a bunker on his way to an opening round of 68 at the Australian Open in Melbourne yesterday

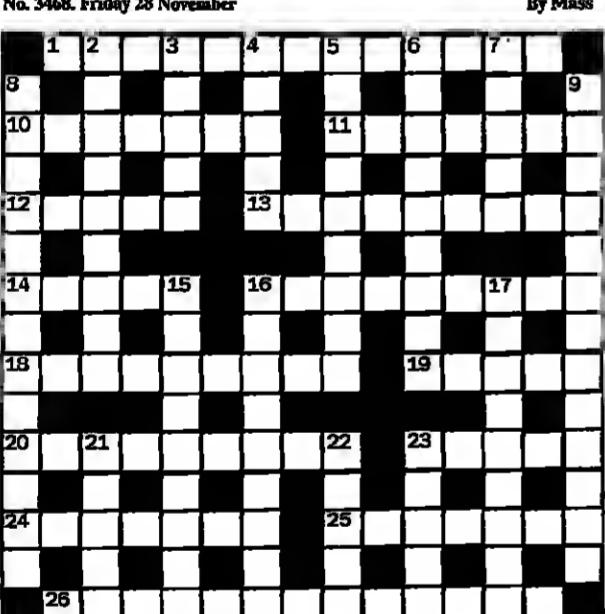
Scores, Sporting Digest, page 31; Photograph: AFP

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3468. Friday 28 November

By Mass

Thursday's solution



- ACROSS
1 Long, diametrically opposed railings (8-5)
10 Muted Master yielding to pawn, confounded (7)
11 Improve print and outer cracks on china (7)
12 Nick, trendy name (5)
13 White, like first of buds on flower (9)
14 German embracing Germany's measures (5)
16 Arrangement based on harmony (9)
18 Nothing in casting moves, looking back (9)
19 Spring on army man in convulsion (5)
20 It's not fair (9)
23 Just a little dash after time (5)
24 Africans giving party
- BACKING, EG, AROUND NORTH (7)
25 Nod, to show favour? (7)
26 Almost horrified by note in band sounding out (13)
- DOWN
1 Material flowing below river, it's said (5)
2 Not a Labour voter? (9)
3 Material flowing below river, it's said (5)
4 Country or state (not North American) (5)
5 Old soaring tune, say, magic sounds (9)
6 Do they absorb types of industry? (9)
7 Pursue with love, in short (5)
8 Coherent reprinted paper about English Women's Lib is out (13)
9 Cross quickly! (5-8)

Old Mother Woodward finds out cupboard is bare

It goes without saying that Clive Woodward would love to see his side beat the world champions from South Africa at Twickenham tomorrow. But, as Chris Hewett reports, the England coach is plotting a far more significant victory than anything he might achieve on the pitch.

Phil de Glanville, the former England captain, will miss tomorrow's demanding appointment with the rejuvenated keepers of the Springbok flame because of ankle trouble. Nick Greenstock, of Wasps, wins a fourth cap as his replacement and while De Glanville's defensive qualities will undoubtedly be missed, the introduction of one international centre for another is not, on the face of it, a cause for panic.

There are very good reasons for concern, though. If Clive Woodward, the England coach, is correct in his prognosis, it will not be long before the senior clubs' obsession with foreign players leaves the national management without adequate cover in several key positions. The day will dawn when the selectors go in search of a Greenstock and find only southern hemisphere thirtysomethings with dodgy hamstrings and six-figure bank balances.

Woodward spent much of last week in Old Mother Hubbard mode, bemoaning the worrying scarcity of provisions. Last night, he returned to the soapbox with a vengeance, lambasting the short-sightedness and self-interest he sees around him and accusing top English teams of shelling out pension plans to

imported has-beens rather than priceless top-level opportunities to youngsters with a legitimate future in the national set-up.

"The current structure of English rugby is laughable," he said in an interview broadcast on Sky's *Rugby Club* programme. "I don't think there is a country in the world in a worse position to generate a successful national side. I'm determined to be part of the team that fixes this. It's not part of my job description, but it's close to my heart."

He described Harlequins' decision to sign Zinzan Brooke, the great All Black No 8, as a "disaster", adding: "The headlines in New Zealand were 'Zimmy retires'. I've nothing against him - he's a top bloke and good luck to him - but we're just paying his pension. No one can come up to me and say the current structure is right for English rugby. The club scene needs a successful England team and England need a successful club scene. At the moment, we haven't got either."

Short-term success tomorrow depends on the ability of what amounts to a second new England line-up in three weeks finding adequate cohesion in the face of what is certain to be a challenge of extreme seriousness. Three-quarters of the way through a four-match series against the best the world has to offer, Woodward finds himself with a fresh left-wing, an untried midfield partnership, a pair of locks boasting five caps between them and an experimental conception in the back row.

Thankfully, Lawrence Dallaglio does not appear the least bit perturbed by the comprehensive dismantling of the side that performed so honourably in defeat against New Zealand last weekend. "The aim is to set down our marker, not only to equal the southern hemisphere

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